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THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT

General Editor

ALFRED E. GARVIE, M.A.(Oxon.), D.D.(Glas.)

PRINCIPAL OF NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. MARK

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

By the Rev. S. W. GREEN, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS
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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

HAVING carefully selected the editors of the ten volumes of which the Westminster New Testament will consist, and having fully explained to them the purpose of the series, the General Editor is leaving them the greatest possible liberty; and the editor of each volume is alone responsible for the opinions expressed in it. It is hoped that thus any lack of uniformity will be amply compensated for by the varied interest which the free expression of his own individuality by each editor will impart to the series. While the standpoint adopted is that of modern critical scholarship, only the generally accepted results, and not the vagaries of individual critics, are being presented, and in such a fashion as to avoid unnecessarily giving any offence or causing any difficulty to the reverent Bible student. As the series is intended especially for teachers, lay preachers, and others engaged in Christian work, their needs are being kept particularly in view, and the Commentary aims at being as practically useful as possible. A new arrangement in printing the text and the notes has been adopted, which it is believed will be found an improvement.

A. E. GARVIE.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON,

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THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

INTRODUCTION.

In entering upon a study of one of the Gospels, it is important to distinguish between the book itself and the problems to which it gives rise. The book, together with the influence it has had over the mind, the heart, the will of men, constitutes a *fact.* So long as we deal with this fact we are dealing with certainties, and the essential preliminary to any effective criticism of a Gospel — consideration of its sources, authorship, and date, its historical value, its relation to other Gospels—is to see the fact itself as clearly as may be, to let the book speak for itself. The fact first, its meaning and worth later: in the former investigation we try to see what indubitably *is,* in the latter to exercise judgment upon *problems* still in the region of debate and uncertainty. Hence this brief Introduction will look first at the book itself—its subject, contents, and characteristics; then at the main problems which gather round it.

I. THE BOOK.

1. *Subject.* This is announced in the opening words, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." There is reason to interpret "gospel," as here used, in the sense of the facts about Jesus (see n. on i. 1), and, whether this title is original or not, it correctly describes the scope of the work. Mark does not write a "Life of Christ": so far as chronological indications go, all that he relates might fall within the space of a single year. To adopt a phrase from the earliest known comment on his Gospel (quoted below, II. 2), he writes "the things either said or done by the Christ," *i.e.* by Jesus, whose words and deeds declared Him to be Messiah, and so, when gathered together in a continuous story, constitute not merely a biography, complete or fragmentary, but a *Gospel.* Only, if we are to do justice to the perspective of the book, we must add to "things said or done" another phrase, "things suffered"; for not only are these told with significant fulness, but they are led up to by repeated forecasts in the earlier stages of the narrative.

The *subject,* then, is the things said, done, and suffered by Jesus Christ. The further question whether the writer had a definite *aim,* beyond the general one of letting his story show that Jesus was the Christ, is not raised at this point, because it belongs rather to the problems of the book than to the fact of the book. For *aim* easily passes into *tendency,* and to decide that the author of a Gospel has a tendency may at once suggest critical doubts as to how far history may have been coloured by, or subordinated to, dogmatic purpose.

The question of Mark's *treatment* of his subject opens up grave critical problems: the subject itself is unmistakable.

2. *Contents.* The book falls into *sections*, loosely strung together into a sequence, with indications of place and time which serve for connecting links, but which are too occasional and vague to give sure data for reconstruction of the history. A sectional division is given in the commentary which follows, and need not here be repeated. The story shows a certain advance, notably in the opposition to Jesus, in His "training of the Twelve" and in His Messianic claim, but this advance is not obtruded by sharply marked divisions. A mid-point of the Gospel may be found in Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ (viii. 29): this great discovery is prepared for by all that precedes and dominates all that follows, yet it is recorded without special emphasis. Perhaps, in broad outline, the *contents* may be thus set forth:—

(1) *Title and Introduction*, i. 1–8.

(2) *Baptism and Temptation*, i. 9–13.

(3) *The beginnings of the Galilæan Ministry*, i. 14–45.

(4) *The rise and growth of opposition*, ii. 1–iii. 6.

(5) *The Ministry at its height*, iii. 7–vi. 29 (the multitude, iii. 7–12; choice of the Twelve, iii. 13–19; opponents rebuked, iii. 20–35; teaching in parables, iv. 1–34; a group of mighty works, iv. 35–v. 43; rejection at Nazareth, vi. 1–6; the mission of the Twelve, vi. 7–13; episode of the death of John the Baptist, vi. 14–29).

(6) *From the return of the Twelve to the close of the Galilæan ministry*, vi. 30–ix. 50 (the feeding of the

five thousand and walking on the sea, vi. 30–52; ministry in Gennesaret, vi. 53–56; discourse against the "tradition of the elders," vii. 1–23; withdrawal from Galilee and tour through Phœnicia and Decapolis, vii. 24–37; the feeding of the four thousand, viii. 1–10; demand for a sign from heaven, the leaven of the Pharisees, cure of a blind man, viii. 11–26; Peter's confession, the first announcement of the Passion, the Transfiguration, viii. 27–ix. 13; cure of an epileptic boy, ix. 14–29; second announcement of the Passion, ix. 30–32; "who is the greatest?" ix. 33–50).

(7) *On the way to Jerusalem,* x. 1–52 (question of divorce, vers. 1–12; blessing little children, 13–16; the rich young ruler, 17–31; third announcement of the Passion, 32–34; petition of the sons of Zebedee, 35–45; blind Bartimæus, 46–52).

(8) *The Last Week,* xi. 1–xvi. 8 (entry into Jerusalem, xi. 1–11; the barren fig tree, xi. 12–14, 20–25; cleansing the Temple, xi. 15–18; questions on the authority of Jesus, tribute to Cæsar, the resurrection, the greatest commandment, the son of David, xi. 27–xii. 37; denunciation of the scribes, xii. 38–40; the widow's mite, xii. 41–44; discourse on the Last Things, xiii. 1–37; the anointing at Bethany, xiv. 1–9; Judas Iscariot, xiv. 10, 11; the Last Supper, xiv. 12–26; Gethsemane, xiv. 27–42; the arrest, xiv. 43–52; the Trial before the high priest, xiv. 53–65; Peter's denial, xiv. 66–72; the Trial before Pilate, xv. 1–20; the Crucifixion and Burial, xv. 21–47; the Resurrection, xvi. 1–8).

3. *Characteristics.*

(*a*) *In the substance of the narrative.* Here it is not possible to continue to regard this Gospel as an isolated fact. Comparison is inevitable, either

definitely, with the two other records which cover the same ground (St. Matthew and St. Luke), or with some vaguer familiarity with the Gospel history as a whole. So judged, the chief characteristic of St. Mark will appear as *defect*, especially in regard to the *teaching* of Jesus: no Sermon on the Mount or Lord's Prayer, of the wealth of parables only four, hardly any extended discourses. The sections of St. Mark which have no parallel in St. Matthew or St. Luke are *four* only: one parable, iv. 26–29; two cures, vii. 31–37, viii. 22–26; and the incident of xiv. 51, 52. The effect of this reticence as to the teaching (whatever may be its cause) is to bring into relief the *deeds* of Jesus: "The emphasis is laid on Power—Power expressing itself in a bright, swift series of marvellous deeds that strike the beholder with amazement, so that the note of admiration recurs again and again. Shall we not all say that the reading of this Gospel is like nothing so much as the passing through some picture gallery, where in clear outline, soft bright colouring, is represented a series of amazing deeds?" (W. Medley, *The N.T. an Organic Unity*).

Yet this defect must not be exaggerated. The narrative clearly shows the stress Jesus Himself laid upon His commission to teach, and presents, if in outline only, His leading ideas, especially concerning the kingdom of God and the Messiah; while it falls no whit behind the fuller records in the impression it conveys of His fearless passion for reality, the freshness, simplicity, and spirituality of His teaching against a background of the lifeless and loveless formalism which had usurped the name and place of religion, the convincing

authority with which His word went home to the hearts and consciences of those who heard.

(*b*) *In the form of the narrative.* The main characteristic is summed up in the word *vividness*: the picture is lifelike. In the *arrangement* of his material Mark succeeds in fashioning out of a series of episodes a continuous and enthralling story. The links may at times be vague or artificial, but in spite of this "the history is effective and even powerful. We are carried swiftly from one situation to another, in which Jesus is master of all the circumstances and all the persons, chooses the best means, shows Himself worthy of all confidence even in the most trying position, and utters the word never to be forgotten, which was true then and is true still. The writer is entirely out of sight; one never thinks of him; the story is everything" (Menzies).

And this skill in graphic narration is found not only in the *whole*, but in the *parts* of which it is made up. Mark's treatment of an incident is continually *fuller* than Matthew's or Luke's, and the added matter generally helps us to realise and interpret the scene. Often by a single touch—the record of a look, movement, emotion, or pregnant word—he gives a *realism* to his picture which is either due to the fidelity of an observant eye-witness or is the product of consummate art. Instances are noted in the commentary: it is perhaps more profitable to receive this impression of graphic realism from a study of the Gospel itself (with parallels) than from tabulated details.

4. *Influence.* It remains simply to be noted that the influence exerted by the book may legitimately be regarded as part of the *fact* of

which criticism must take account. It is true that it is difficult to isolate the impression of Jesus Christ due to St. Mark alone from the other elements which combine with this to form the grounds of Christian faith — additional *history* in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and in the Acts; *interpretation* of the Christian facts in the Epistles and the Apocalypse; *both history and interpretation* in the Fourth Gospel. But the attempt may be made (see Dr. W. H. Bennett, *The Life of Christ according to St. Mark*), and it is to be remembered that, in all probability, St. Mark is our only source for a knowledge of the main outlines of a Life of Christ (see below, II. 3). If the sections *parallel* to St. Mark in the other two Synoptics are *derived* from him, it is obvious that the value of our Gospel is immensely enhanced, and that its influence in the making of Christendom could scarcely be overestimated. That influence is to be noted as a fact, which, though it does not prejudge a single conclusion of criticism, is itself a problem for criticism. Criticism has its rights, which every lover of truth will not only admit but welcome: the "plain man" has his rights too, whether he be represented by the individual believer or by the collective faith of traditional Christianity. It may be freely allowed that criticism largely modifies and corrects the traditional view of the Gospels, but in its final results it must keep in touch with the *fact* of their influence in the world, or its solution of the problem runs short. To give a single instance of what is meant: in the most recent of noteworthy contributions to the study of the Gospels, the brilliant work of M. Loisy (*Les Évangiles*

Synoptiques, 1908), he writes of St. Mark as "an anonymous compilation, a residuum, more or less heterogeneous, of the historical tradition of the Gospel, and of the interpretations, the corrections, the additions with which the activity of Christian thinking had embellished it. . . . The most personal and the least literary of the three Synoptics is Mark. He treats the sources more roughly and less skilfully than Matthew and than Luke. He cuts out and he adds with a sort of brutality, with no more care for the resulting incoherencies of form than for the improbabilities and contradictions of matter. He has not produced a book but a free compilation, in which it is very difficult to distinguish order or plan."

Now, such a judgment (led up to by a rigorous analysis of the Gospel) may be valid or not. But the point is that it appeals to broad impressions on which the student of far less critical equipment is entitled to pronounce (cf. I. *3*). And it leaves an unsatisfied wonder as to how a work so destitute of historical foundation and so clumsily compiled could ever have had such influence in the world, and can still exert such claim upon the mind and heart of men as must be attributed to this "Gospel according to St. Mark."

II. THE PROBLEMS.

1. *Authorship.* The book is *anonymous* (see n. on xiv. 51, 52): from the end of the second century, when the earliest clear tradition as to the authorship of the Gospels emerges, it has been ascribed to Mark, identified with the John Mark, John, or simply Mark, of the Acts and Epistles. In Acts

he is first named when Peter, delivered from prison, "came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark" (xii. 12). He was, therefore, a Jew of Jerusalem, who had followed the common practice of adding to his Jewish name of John a secondary Latin name, Marcus: his mother's home was evidently a centre for the Christian community. A little later he accompanied Barnabas and Saul from Jerusalem to Antioch, was taken by them in the subordinate capacity of "minister" or "attendant" (R.V.) on their first missionary journey to Cyprus, crossed with them from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia, where he left them and returned to Jerusalem (xii. 25, xiii. 5, 13). This incident is not necessarily to his discredit: the journey may have been extended beyond the original plan (in Cyprus Barnabas and his cousin Mark were in the country of their family, Acts iv. 36), and Mark may have had claims which called him home. But when Barnabas subsequently proposed to Paul that Mark should again accompany them in their projected second missionary journey, Paul demurred, sharp contention ensued, and Barnabas parted from Paul, taking Mark with him to Cyprus, where the history leaves them (xv. 36–40). From the next references, some ten years later, we learn from Paul that Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, now a "fellow-worker" with the Apostle and a "comfort" to him, was with him in Rome, and that special instructions had been sent to the Church at Colossæ to give Mark a welcome if he should come: the old grievance is completely effaced (Col. iv. 10, 11; Philem. 24). Two later references still connect Mark with Rome, in the one case as sent for by Paul because he is

"useful for ministering" (2 Tim. iv. 11); in the other as with Peter, who affectionately styles him "Mark, my son" (1 Pet. v. 13). Thus the first and the last notices of Mark connect him with Peter, the intermediate ones with Paul: it is on the former of these connections that tradition concerning the authorship of the Gospel has laid stress.

2. *Sources.* Whence did Mark derive the material of his story? "One of the oldest and most trustworthy of Christian traditions represents Mark as St. Peter's interpreter, and as the author of a collection of memoirs which gave the substance of St. Peter's teaching" (Dr. Swete). Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, as quoted by Eusebius, the Church historian of the fourth century, writes as follows (probably before 150 A.D.): "And this the Elder used to say: Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately, though not in orderly arrangement, all that he remembered of the things either said or done by the Christ. For he was neither a hearer nor a follower of the Lord, but later, as I have said, he was a follower of Peter, who arranged his teachings as need dictated, but not as though he was compiling a complete account of the Lord's sayings. So then Mark made no mistake in thus writing down some things as he remembered them; for his one care was not to omit or misrepresent anything that he had heard." This important testimony comes from the middle of the second century: at the close of the century it receives confirmation from Irenæus (who states what the "remembered" of Papias seems to imply, that Mark wrote after Peter's death), and from Clement of Alexandria, who places Peter's preaching in Rome, and says

that Mark wrote down what was said in a "Gospel" at the request of the hearers, Peter (still alive) neither opposing nor furthering the design. The evidence is not entirely consistent, and many points in it are still under discussion, but the main situation seems amply attested. Long before the Gospels were *written*, the facts of the Life and Teaching of Christ were *taught* by the Apostles and their helpers, in sections of convenient length and dealing with the subject most appropriate to the need. This *oral teaching* would become stereotyped by frequent repetition; different cycles of it would gain currency in different centres of the Church, would ultimately be committed to writing, and would furnish to the Evangelists, whether in oral or written form, the chief material for their Gospels. Amid all the conflicting theories of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels, it is indubitable that their *ultimate* source lies in this *oral tradition* (cf. Luke i. 4: that Evangelist commits his Gospel to writing that Theophilus might know the certainty of the things in which he had been orally instructed (lit. catechised)). In this *catechetical* work Peter, in Jerusalem, took a leading part from the first, teaching in Aramaic. At some later period, when Peter had left Jerusalem for ministry among Greek-speaking peoples, Mark became his interpreter, turning his master's Aramaic sections into Greek; and at a later period still (whether before or after Peter's death) he wrote down all that he remembered of the teaching which he had so often heard and translated. It will be noted that Papias relies for his information upon the Elder (or Presbyter); that is, on the enigmatical John the Elder (prominent in discussion on the authorship of

the Fourth Gospel), to whom he also makes reference in describing the sources of which he had availed himself in compiling his "Exposition of Oracles of the Lord": "If any should chance to come my way who had been a follower of the elders, I would question him as to what was said by Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what Aristion and John the Elder say." This passage does not fall for discussion here (for a suggestion that the last twelve verses of St. Mark are due to Aristion, see below, II. 5), but it is evident that this testimony to a Petrine basis for Mark's Gospel goes back very near to Apostolic days. Even M. Loisy (speaking however not of our present Gospel, but of its supposed original substratum, edited and amplified by a later compiler), writes: "A special and direct relation of this first author to Peter is possible, even probable. . . . Nothing prevents the admission that a disciple of Peter received from the very mouth of the Apostle this series of souvenirs." Some indications of Petrine influence, not very prominent or decisive, may be gathered from the Gospel itself. But it must be observed that all that has been said in this section leaves large questions still open. Does the testimony of Papias refer to what we know as the Gospel according to St. Mark? Even if it does, is it trustworthy in this, or is it possible that a tradition originally relating to a Petrine source (perhaps reduced to writing by Mark) had attached itself to a later work (our present Gospel) in which that source was incorporated? And if so, how much of the Gospel is due to the first and credible author who records Peter's

teaching, and how much to the less trustworthy later editor? These questions, gravely affecting as they do the value of any inferences as to the historical truth of the Gospel which might be drawn from its traditional association with the Apostle Peter, must be briefly considered below. Meanwhile, however, we note that almost by common consent "it seems safe to assume as a working theory of the origination of the Gospel, that its main source is the teaching of St. Peter" (Dr. Swete).

3. *Relation of St. Mark to the other Synoptics.* It has already been noted (I. 3) that practically the whole substance of St. Mark appears either in St. Matthew or in St. Luke or in both. Moreover, this *resemblance* between the three Gospels is not confined to their choice of the same cycle of *events* (significant when it is remembered that between them they contain only fragmentary memoirs of our Lord's ministry): they relate these events substantially in the same *order* and to a great extent in identical *language.* This means that they cannot be independent records: they draw upon *some common source,* either written (as the numerous and striking verbal identities would suggest) or oral (which would better explain the numerous differences in language, often slight and apparently motiveless if they are using the same document). The difficulty of the Synoptic Problem (of which no extended discussion is here possible) is to frame a theory of the interdependence of the Synoptic Gospels which will account both for the *resemblances* and for the *differences.* It may be affirmed, broadly speaking, that it is now generally agreed that the Synoptics are derived from *two*

main sources: the one a *narrative source*, containing the outline of the Ministry as given by Mark, the other a *compilation of the teaching* of Jesus, very probably to be identified with the work ascribed to Matthew by Papias in the well-known statement, "Matthew composed the Logia (Sayings) in the Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted them as he was able." The former of these sources appears most simply in St. Mark; St. Matthew and St. Luke combine with it the other source (perhaps using different editions), while St. Luke (as his preface tells us) gathered additional material of his own. The principal questions still under debate are these: (1) Was the narrative source oral or written? (The general opinion is that it is easier to account for the differences, assuming it to be written, than for the identities, assuming it to be oral; but see W.N.T. St. Matthew, Introd. p. 5.) (2) Did St. Mark know and make any use of the "teaching source"? (3) Did the three Synoptists make common use of an earlier "narrative source," nearly agreeing in scope with our Second Gospel, but not to be identified with it? In this case St. Mark is secondary, one of three editions of a more primitive source, which may have been considerably modified and added to in the process of editing. Or may we dispense with this theory of a "primitive Mark" (*Urmarkus*), identify the "narrative source" with our Second Gospel, and affirm that St. Matthew and St. Luke *used* St. Mark, combining the Logia (and other lesser sources) with his story of "the things said or done by the Christ"? If so, St. Mark is the *earliest* of the Synoptics, and may well represent (with some amount of editorial revision) the *Petrine memoirs* which early tradition (see above,

II. 2) connects with Mark "the disciple and interpreter of Peter."

It is the third of the questions which specially concerns the student of this Gospel. And here it can only be affirmed that, in the present stage of critical opinion, the view just referred to may fairly be said to prevail. There is really no ground for regarding St. Mark as the heterogeneous, inartistic, and untrustworthy *compilation* to which M. Loisy reduces it (see I. 4); against such criticism there is a valid counter appeal to the broad impression produced by the book even upon the uncritical but receptive reader: see I. 3 (*a*), (*b*). Dr. Swete, while reserving opinion as to the nature and extent of editorial revision which St. Mark's original has undergone, puts it on record that he rose from his study of the Gospel with a strong sense of the *unity* of the work: the present writer can only echo that judgment, with its rejection of the hypothesis of a "primitive Mark" of unknown contents. The "narrative source" used by the other Synoptics was certainly in substance nearly identical with St. Mark, not with some attenuated precursor of that Gospel; and the argument for their actual use of St. Mark is too strong to be vitiated by their divergences from him. They give virtually the whole of his *facts*, in the same *order* (for even when they depart from his order it can be shown that they are aware of it, and that the variation is due to their introduction of fresh material), continually in the same *language*. At times their narrative shows deliberate *condensation* of Mark's fuller record (see the commentary) or *modification* of an expression which might offend or be found obscure (notable instances are Mark's

"He could there do no mighty work," vi. 5, compared with Matthew's "And he did not many mighty works there," xiii. 58; Mark's *mysterious* prediction, "But when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not," xiii. 14, *partially explained* by Matthew, "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place," xxiv. 15, *interpreted* by Luke, "But when ye see Jerusalem encompassed by armies," xxi. 20). All this (together with other indications of *secondary* treatment of the common source in the First and Third Gospels) makes for the *priority* of St. Mark, and if the impression of the unity of his work, already referred to, is valid, it is reasonable to regard this Gospel as a *primitive source* for the main facts of our Lord's ministry, and to accept the tradition that, in the main, it is based upon the eye-witness of an Apostle. The objection that the somewhat grudging terms of Papias' witness (II. 2) seem rather to suit a work less complete and orderly than our present Gospel of St. Mark may be met by the fact that the witness comes from a circle (Ephesus) in which the Fourth Gospel, with its elaborate plan and didactic purpose, was the standard of comparison: the suggestion that Papias (or the Elder) is inventing the best excuse he can for an unsatisfactory and anonymous work which had already gained circulation, is without foundation. Of course, if criticism must bring to its task of analysis and historical estimate of the Gospel certain *presuppositions*—that Jesus *could* not have worked miracles, or believed Himself to be the Messiah, or predicted His death (still less have spoken of it as a "ransom for many," x. 45,

or have used concerning it the language of the Lord's Supper, xiv. 22–24), or, in the plain meaning of the word, have "risen" from the dead—the case is radically altered. It may still remain possible to distinguish in Mark's work a slender thread of history, and, especially, of the actual teaching of Jesus, but all that is most characteristic becomes due to the after-play of Christian thinking upon the facts. The Gospel will appear to be steeped in Pauline ideas concerning the Person and Work of Christ: instead of supposing that the *history* created the *faith*, we must believe in the strange process of faith creating history, and see every part of Mark's story dominated and fashioned by a desire to bring the facts into accord with the beliefs of the early Christian community. This "earliest of the Synoptics" (and, we may add, this chief authority for any knowledge we possess of the historical facts concerning Jesus) "is as to its object and character much more a work of faith than a testimony of history," and it follows naturally that it "cannot have been written by a disciple of Peter" (Loisy). Such criticism must for the present be left to work out its own destiny, and solve (if it can) the new set of problems it raises as to how this "faith," bereft of its historical foundation, ever came to be, and to energise so mightily that it created a "history" which has won belief, inspired devotion, fashioned conduct and character, wrought for the world's progress as never did history before or since. The alleged prominence of *Pauline ideas* is open to the judgment of any careful student ("The Paulinism of Mark does not amount to very much" (Menzies); "St. Mark does not write with a dogmatic purpose"

(Swete)); so, too, is the estimate of the book to which M. Loisy's critical principles lead him (see again, I. 4 and I. 3). Meanwhile we may believe that the substance of the Synoptic Gospels rests securely upon the twofold *historical* foundation of this Gospel of Mark who "became the interpreter of Peter," and that other collection of our Lord's teaching, no less authoritative, which tradition ascribes to the Apostle Matthew.

4. *Destination and Date.* There is a strong ancient tradition (now generally accepted) that Mark wrote in Rome and for the Roman Church. This accords with the swiftness and vigour of the narrative, especially in its emphasis on the *power* of Jesus, see I. 3 (*a*), and with the *subordination of the Jewish element* (few references to the fulfilment of O.T. Scriptures); it receives confirmation from the *explanation of Aramaic words* (iii. 17, v. 41, vii. 11, 34, xv. 22, 34) and of *Jewish customs* (vii. 3, 4, xiv. 12, xv. 42). The argument from the use of *Latin words* is not decisive, because these had probably passed into the current Greek, which was now the literary language of the Empire; but it is at least noteworthy that these Latinisms are nearly twice as numerous in St. Mark as in either St. Matthew or St. Luke.

As to the date: if the Gospel was written after the death of Peter, as Irenæus says, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, as seems to be implied by xiii. 2, its composition falls between 65 and 70 A.D. The apocalyptic sections of the discourse in chap. xiii., especially vers. 14–19, suggest that the catastrophe was imminent. These indications, together with the natural inference from ix. 1 that some, if not most, of the followers of Jesus had

already passed away before the prediction found fulfilment, warrant the conclusion that the Gospel was written shortly before the fateful year 70.

5. *The last twelve verses.* It may now be regarded as an assured finding of criticism that these verses are not part of St. Mark's Gospel. The internal evidence (in itself really decisive for their rejection, see notes on xvi. 9–20) is confirmed by the external testimony. It is true that the ending has place in the enormous majority of witnesses to the text; but in textual criticism mere numbers count for nothing. Eusebius testifies that in nearly all the MSS current in his time "The End" of the Gospel was marked at the words "for they were afraid." The R.V. has a space after ver. 8, and notes in the margin that the verses are omitted by the two oldest Greek MSS (the Vatican and the Sinaitic) and by some other authorities (one MS. of the Old Latin, MSS of the Ethiopic, and the Sinaitic Syriac found in 1892). Further, the R.V. margin also states that "some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." This *shorter ending* is found, without the longer, in the Old Latin copy just referred to, and, as an alternative to the longer, in several Greek MSS, and Versions. It runs thus: "But all that was enjoined them they reported briefly to Peter and those with him. And after this, Jesus himself appeared to them, and from the east and as far as to the west sent forth through them the holy and incorruptible proclamation of eternal salvation."

As compared with the *longer ending*, the evidence extant shows the shorter one to have had a very limited currency, but its existence throws light on the traditional conclusion to the Gospel. Both

endings are in fact attempts to fill an obvious blank in this final page of Mark's story, which brings the women to the empty tomb, records the angelic vision, with its announcement that Jesus is risen from the dead, prepares for appearances in Galilee of the risen Lord, and then abruptly ends with the amazing anti-climax, "and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid." Various suggestions are offered as to the cause of this abrupt conclusion — an interrupted task, a lost leaf, suppression by Church authority. It seems certain that Mark, master of vivid and effective narrative, cannot have *intended* to break off his story at this point (although M. Loisy finds that the fact of the empty tomb is recorded as sufficient evidence of the Resurrection, and that this inconclusive argument, together with the inartistic and impotent ending, are quite characteristic of our author's incapacity for logical thinking or for literary form!). There we must leave it, as yet an unexplained problem.

A suggestion as to the authorship of the longer conclusion (due to Mr. F. C. Conybeare, in 1891) has gained some acceptance. In an Armenian MS. examined by him, dated 986 A.D., the section Mark xvi. 9–20 is prefaced by the heading "Of the presbyter Ariston." If, as surmised by Mr. Conybeare, this Ariston is to be identified with the Aristion mentioned by Papias (see II. 2), the fragment is of high antiquity and of notable authorship: as a summary of the post-Resurrection history current in Ephesus under the influence of St. John, early in the second century, it may have been judged "worthy to complete the unfinished work of the Evangelist" (Swete). This is interesting

conjecture; but some misgiving perhaps remains as to whether the summary in itself does great credit to the authorship of one so near Apostolic days and held in the repute accorded to Aristion; and as to how it could, by responsible authority, have ever been deemed a suitable continuation of Mark's graphic but unfinished story of the Resurrection.

Mark i. 1.

THE TITLE.

1 The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

The verse stands detached, as a brief but suggestive title to the whole book.

1. **The beginning.** Probably refers to the starting-point adopted by the author in the ministry of John the Baptist (cf. Acts i. 22): no introductory matter such as each of the other Evangelists contributes.

the gospel. The term is not here applied to a *book*, a usage dating from the second century, but to a *message* of good tidings. This message was from God and was proclaimed by Jesus (ver. 14). As the beginning of this "gospel" was the testimony of John the Baptist, the phrase here seems rather to mean the gospel concerning Jesus Christ than proclaimed by Him: the good news is identified with the story of what He was and did and taught and suffered. The word occurs also in vers. 14, 15, viii. 35, x. 29, xiii. 10, xiv. 9, xvi. 15, and elsewhere in the Gospels only in Matt. iv. 23, ix. 35, xxiv. 14 ("the gospel of the kingdom"); xxvi. 13.

Jesus Christ. The double *name* marks the completion of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. It is

frequent in Paul, very rare in the Gospels (Matt. i. 1, 18 (xvi. 21); John i. 17, xvii. 3).

the Son of God. R.V. marg. omits. Elsewhere in the Gospel the title refers to the mission of Jesus rather than to His nature: it attests the Divine source of His office as God's representative (i. 11, iii. 11, v. 7, ix. 7, xv. 39 (see n.); compare Ps. ii. 7). Here we may see in it an expression of the writer's own belief concerning the Person of Christ. The story he sets out to write is a "gospel," centring in Jesus, who was Messiah and the very Son of God.

Mark i. 2–8; cf. Matt. iii. 1–12=Luke iii. 1–18.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

2 as it is written in the Prophets, *Behold, I send my*
messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way
3 *before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness,*
Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism
5 of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went
out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem,
and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, con-
6 fessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's
hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he
7 did eat locusts and wild honey; and preached, saying,
There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of
whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.
8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall
baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

1. **John the Baptist** appears in each of the four Gospels as the forerunner of Jesus. His ministry

has a double aspect. (1) It is a denunciation of national sin, a call to repentance in view of the near approach of the kingdom of heaven, thundered forth by a prophet in "the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke i. 17, vii. 24–28). This fearless preaching of righteousness is described in fuller detail in Matthew and Luke. (2) The success of this religious revival led to a quickened expectation of Messiah and, according to Luke (iii. 15), to a surmise that John himself was the Christ. John disavows the title, and predicts the coming of a mightier One, with whose ministry his own is set in humble contrast. Hence his mission assumes a *preparatory* value, emphasised in the Synoptics and in Acts (i. 22, x. 37, xiii. 23, 24), and an *evidential* one, on which the Fourth Gospel lays special stress. The need of such "spade-work" prior to the greatest religious movements may be illustrated from Luke i. 77: John was to recall his countrymen to the truth proclaimed by the prophets of Israel, that the only real "salvation" for a people lies in repentance and forgiveness of sins. Note, too, how in the last crowded months of His ministry our Lord anticipates His own coming by sending the seventy disciples to prepare His way (Luke x. 1).

2. **as.** The word introduces a comparison between prediction and fulfilment, which is either left unfinished or (as in R.V.) is completed in ver. 4: "Even as it is written . . . John came."

in the prophets. R.V., "in Isaiah the prophet." "The prophets" is probably a copyist's emendation, to cover the quotation from Malachi which is linked (by Mark alone) with that from Isaiah.

Behold, etc. From Mal. iii. 1, applied by Christ Himself to John's mission (Matt. xi. 10; Luke vii. 27: the similar prediction of Mal. iv. 5, of the coming of "Elijah," is also regarded as fulfilled in John the Baptist, ix. 12; Matt. xvii. 11; Luke i. 16, 17). The prophet thinks of a herald of Divine judgment, and this element is conspicuous in John's conception of Messiah (Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii. 17). Was it wonderful that, when in prison he heard of the gracious words and works of Jesus, he sent to ask, "Art *thou* he that cometh?" (Matt. xi. 2–6; Luke vii. 18–23)?

3. **The voice,** etc. From Isa. xl. 3, a prophecy of deliverance addressed to the exiles in Babylon. As the forerunner of an Eastern monarch sees that where the king journeys his road is cleared of all obstacles, so this impersonal "voice" summons Israel, in bold metaphor, to cut straight through the desert which lay between Babylon and Jerusalem a highway for their God. To each of the Synoptists John the Baptist is this herald-voice, while in the Fourth Gospel he himself appropriates the simile (John i. 23). Luke gives the quotation more fully, for the sake of its closing words: "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke iii. 6; compare ii. 30).

in the wilderness. In the Hebrew of Isa. xl. 3 the words connect with what follows (see R.V.): here, as in LXX and Vulgate, with added point for the fulfilment in John the Baptist. The wilderness of Judæa in which he preached, between Jerusalem and the Red Sea, stands for the vast Arabian Desert of the prophecy.

the Lord. In the prophecy *Jehovah,* in the application *Jesus,* to whom the Divine doings and

attributes of the O.T. Scriptures are freely transferred by the N.T. writers.

4. **John did baptize.** R.V., "John came, who baptized." Whether John's baptism was suggested by the baptism of proselytes to Judaism, or by the ceremonial "washings" (vii. 3, 4), the prominence given to it in the narrative and his title of "the Baptist" mark it out as a new and distinctive rite of his ministry. The immersion of his converts in the Jordan typifies not a ceremonial but a *moral* cleansing: it is a baptism characterised by repentance, accompanied by public confession (ver. 5), and therefore an act directed towards and resulting in the forgiveness of sins. In Christian baptism the same moral elements appear, but with the significant additions of "the name of Jesus Christ" and "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 38; xix. 1–6).

remission. In iii. 29 the same word is rendered "forgiveness," and the corresponding verb is the great N.T. word "to forgive," the root idea being that of release from a debt (compare Matt. vi. 12 with Luke xi. 4).

5. The appearance of this new prophet stirred the whole nation. Luke specifies publicans and soldiers as well as "the multitudes"; Matthew, "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees," but upon this class, at least, John made no abiding impression. See xi. 31; Matt. xi. 18.

6. The dress of a prophet and food of an ascetic. Compare Elijah, 2 Kings i. 8, R.V. marg.; also Matt. xi. 18.

7. **preached.** The proclamation of the coming Messiah is here set down simply as a separate stage or element in John's preaching. In Matthew

and Luke the thought of judgment is prominent, making the prophecy an urgent motive to repentance.

the latchet of whose shoes. The coming One is therefore human, yet so exalted that John is not worthy to do for him the offices of the meanest slave. **stoop down** is peculiar to Mark, one of his picturesque touches.

8. **water . . . the Holy Ghost.** The contrast marks John's sense of the insufficiency of his work. Human sin needs deeper remedy than repentance and the water symbolic of moral cleansing: it must be driven out and replaced by the affections and energies of a new life, a life of spirit of which the only source and maintenance is the Spirit of God. This gift to men of the Holy Spirit is an element in Messianic prophecy (Joel ii. 28, 29; Isa. xliv. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27), and is realised through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts ii. 1–4, xi. 15–17; xix. 1–7; Rom. viii. 1–17; John iii. 1–8). The instability of repentance not supplemented by the control of new impulses and aspirations is impressively illustrated by the parable of Matt. xii. 43–45.

Matthew and Luke add "and with fire," *i.e.*, as the next verse shows, the fire of *judgment*, a feature already noted as more prominent in their account of John the Baptist than in that of Mark.

Mark i. 9–11; cf. Matt. iii. 13–17=Luke iii. 21–22.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending
11 upon him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

This entrance of **Jesus** upon the scene is dramatic in its simplicity. We have heard nothing of Him or of His home in Nazareth. Mark's own preface (ver. 1) would seem to exclude Him from any personal concern with a "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Yet, without comment, the fact is recorded that He came, as one of the crowd attracted to John's ministry, and with the rest submitted to John's rite of baptism. Was He personally known to John His kinsman (Luke i. 36), and already recognised by him as his predicted "mightier One" (Matt. iii. 14)? Mark gives no hint, and raises no question as to the motive or fitness of the baptism of Jesus by John (Matt. iii. 14, 15). He tells quite simply and naturally that Jesus identified Himself with this national movement of righteousness (so Matt. iii. 15), and tells it for the sake of something that now happened in the consciousness of Jesus. To others John's baptism was "with water" only: to Him it brought the full endowment of the Spirit, the assurance of His Divine Sonship.

10. **straightway.** The word is characteristic of Mark's swift and vivid story, occurring forty-two times (eleven times in this chapter), seven times in Matthew, once only in Luke.

opened. Literally "rending asunder." A more graphic word than the "opened" of Matthew and Luke. Luke adds the characteristic touch that the vision came as Jesus was praying.

the Spirit. Matthew, "the Spirit of God"; Luke, "the Holy Spirit."

dove. A familiar symbol of gentleness (Matt. x. 16), not without reference to the fluttering *motion* of a bird. Luke adds "in bodily form," and suggests an occurrence observed by others, while in the Fourth Gospel the sign is for John the Baptist (John i. 33). But the narrative here records a personal experience of Jesus. He must have told it to His disciples, Himself choosing this metaphor of the dove to describe the impressions of that supreme moment. Compare

> "He came in semblance of a dove,
> With sheltering wings outspread,"

and the experience of Pentecost,

> "He came in tongues of living flame,
> To teach, convince, subdue;
> All powerful as the wind He came,
> As viewless too."

11. **a voice from heaven.** At two other crises in the life of Jesus the same voice speaks to Him: on the Mount of Transfiguration, when the ending of the Galilæan ministry and Peter's confession summoned Him to enter upon "the way of the Cross," and again when, in the story of the Fourth Gospel, the message that certain "Greeks" were seeking Him was the signal that now at last His hour was come (John xii. 20–32).

my beloved Son, etc. The heavenly message comes to Jesus in the familiar language of O.T. Scriptures (see Ps. ii. 7; Isa. xlii. 1). It declares Him God's Son, designated to His office and task

by Divine appointment, and object of the Divine love and satisfaction. In Him are fulfilled the imperfect types of God's ancient messengers and chosen people. There is some evidence that "the Beloved" was one of the current titles of the expected Messiah: if so, we should rather render, "Thou art my Son, the Beloved," two separate descriptions of the Messianic office. But in the Parable of the Husbandmen the phrase "beloved son" (xii. 6) expresses Christ's consciousness of His intimate relation to the Father, and so perhaps here.

The vision is for Jesus Himself, and is not followed by any public claim to be the Messiah. From such recognition He repeatedly shrinks (i. 25, 34, 43, iii. 12, v. 43, vii. 36, viii. 30, etc.; see n. on ii. 10); only when His earthly ministry lay complete behind Him, and His claims would be met, not with a mistaken enthusiasm, but with condemnation to death—only then does He openly declare Himself the Christ (xiv. 62). His sense of Sonship must, for His work's sake, be hid in His heart till it had brought Him to the Cross.

Mark i. 12, 13; cf. Matt. iv. 1–11=Luke iv. 1–13.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

12 And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilder-
13 ness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

The Temptation follows immediately on the exaltation of the Baptism, with its vision and its

voice from heaven. Mark, with impressive brevity, simply records the fact; Matthew (iv. 1–11) and Luke (iv. 1–13) add a parabolic description of the nature of the temptation. In the fresh consciousness of His nature and His mission, Jesus instinctively seeks for solitude. And since "high places are dizzy" and loneliness has its perils for faith and heroic resolve, it was inevitable that, as He pondered upon the ways by which He should fulfil His destiny, some thoughts should present themselves which must be rejected as "savouring not the things of God, but the things of men," suggestions of Satan. The fruits of an acute, prolonged, and victorious struggle are apparent in the calm strength with which He afterwards held on His chosen course: neither friend nor foe nor any happening could break through the defence He had won in that lonely conflict with the powers of evil.

12. **driveth.** R.V., "driveth him forth." A more graphic word than the "was led" of Matthew and Luke; habitually used of the "casting out" of the demons. The first overmastering impulse of the new thought and emotion which possessed Him was retreat into the wilderness. Mark and Luke make the temptation an *incident* of this retreat, Matthew its *purpose* (Matt. iv. 1).

the wilderness. The locality can only be conjectured: perhaps the remoter solitudes of the wilderness of Judæa.

13. **forty days.** Perhaps a "round number": compare Ex. xxxiv. 28; 1 Kings xix. 8; Acts i. 3. The temptation is here represented as continuing during the whole time; so in Luke, with the three temptations as a culminating struggle at the close of the forty days. Matthew seems to imply

that the temptation *began* after the prolonged fast.

tempted. Offered a conscious choice between good, and evil made to look attractive: a possibility for a sinless nature, a necessity for a holy one.

Satan. A Hebrew word for *an adversary*: see 1 Chron. xxi. 1; Ps. cix. 6; and compare Matt. xvi. 23. As *the Adversary* of mankind (Job i., ii.; Zech. iii. 1, 2), its Greek equivalent is *Diabolos* (*devil*), which Matthew and Luke use here.

the wild beasts. A graphic touch to heighten the picture of loneliness.

angels. Their ministry is represented as continuous during the temptation: in Matthew at its close. Compare Luke xxii. 43.

Mark i. 14, 15; cf. Matt. iv. 12–17=Luke iv. 14, 15.

THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY.

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God,
15 and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

The two previous incidents, both of them personal and preparatory, took place in Judæa: now the story of the public Ministry of Jesus opens in Galilee, and Judæa is not revisited till the end is near (x. 1). He begins to preach when John's voice is silenced by imprisonment: so, too, in Matt. iv. 12–17. Both Evangelists assume the arrest of John as a known fact, pausing later in their narrative to give a retrospective account of

his fate, in connection with Herod's fears (Matt. xiv. 1–12; Mark vi. 14–29). Luke avoids this retrospect by inserting a brief record of John's imprisonment in its proper sequence (iii. 18–20), but he does not link on this fact with the commencement of the ministry of Jesus. In Matthew this link is strengthened by the identity of the substance of the first preaching of Jesus with that of the Baptist (compare Matt. iv. 17 with iii. 2); Mark gives a common element in the call to repentance; Luke describes the power and acceptance of the new Teacher (iv. 14, 15), but reserves any indication of what He taught. So far as our Gospel is concerned, the suggestion is that at some *interval* after the Temptation the ending of John's ministry came as a call to Jesus to begin His own. Can we say anything of this *interval*? More specifically, may we assign to it the events related in the Fourth Gospel between the witness of John the Baptist to Jesus (John i. 29–34) and the coming of Jesus into Galilee recorded at John iv. 43? If so, the title given to this section of Mark must be changed, and our view of the following sections will be materially affected. For Jesus has already called disciples, wrought miracles, held high discourse with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, gained many followers, been openly acknowledged as the Christ. Now, without prejudice to the possibility of "harmonising" the two records, it may safely be affirmed that the Synoptic narrative does not assume any knowledge of this earlier ministry. The impression given in Mark's swift story is of a series of *beginnings*—the appearance of a *new* Preacher, His *earliest* disciples, teaching, miracles of healing.

Each Gospel is but a fragment. John tells the Life of Christ on a scheme of his own; so does Mark, and the schemes are not the same. The resulting whole impressions may and must be compared, and supplemented from every other available source, with infinite gain to the understanding of Him who is the one inexhaustible theme; but the attempt to piece the two stories together in detail is not only a task of supreme difficulty but always carries grave risk of misunderstanding each. No such points of contact, therefore, will here be assumed or suggested, except where (*e.g.* in the feeding of the five thousand, and the Last Week) the narratives clearly coincide.

14. **the gospel of the kingdom of God.** R.V., "the gospel of God." The reading of the A.V. is a combination of Matthew's phrase, "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. iv. 23, ix. 35, xxiv. 14) and the Pauline "gospel of God" (1 Thess. ii. 2; Rom. i. 1, etc.; also 1 Pet. iv. 17). Jesus proclaimed and was Himself good tidings sent to men from God (compare i. 1).

15. **The time is fulfilled.** Compare Gal. iv. 4; Rom. xvi. 25; Col. i. 26; Heb. ix. 26. These and other passages show the profound conviction of the early Christian Church that all human history was a preparation for Christ, finding in Him, as did every prophecy of the O.T. Scriptures, its interpretation and its "fulfilment."

the kingdom of God. The phrase here occurs in the same connection as in Matthew's summary of the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 2), with evident stress upon the "eschatological" aspect of the kingdom, a coming crisis

which summons to repentance and faith. The more characteristic teaching of Christ concerning the kingdom is recorded later.

believe the gospel. R.V., "in the gospel." The combination of the verb *believe* with the Greek preposition here employed is unique in the N.T. Probably the verb is to be taken absolutely, "become believers"; *i.e.*, fulfil the one condition of Christian discipleship, faith in *God* through Jesus Christ. This faith needs a *personal object*: the gospel is represented as the sphere *in* which, or, as English idiom would rather put it, the means *by* which the faith may be attained.

This verse is rather to be interpreted as a Christian summary of the preaching of Jesus than as any actual utterance of His at this time. His hearers could not yet know what the gospel was.

Mark i. 16–20; cf. Matt. iv. 18–22 (Luke v. 1–11).

THE CALL OF THE FIRST FOUR DISCIPLES.

16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and
Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were
17 fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and
18 I will make you to become fishers of men. And straight-
19 way they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when
he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of
Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship
20 mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and
they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired
servants, and went after him.

The first recorded act of the new Preacher is the gathering of a small band of personal followers.

(The *word* "disciples" does not occur till ii. 15: in O.T. only Isa. viii. 16.) Luke postpones his account of this (or a very similar) incident till somewhat later in the Ministry, when the fame of Jesus had already gone abroad (Luke v. 1–11), although in his narrative also, Simon appears at an *earlier* time as intimate with Jesus (Luke iv. 38). The prominence given to the fact here (and in Matthew) at least suggests its importance for the purpose and method of Jesus. He made many "disciples," adherents more or less attached to His teaching and to Himself: in this sense John the Baptist and the Pharisees and Moses had their disciples (ii. 18; John ix. 28). But this "call" is of much greater significance. It is Jesus who takes the initiative: these fishermen are not gradually won over to acceptance of the new teaching, but summoned to personal companionship. The incident prepares us for the similar call to Levi (ii. 14), and for the sequel, when "He calleth unto him whom he himself would . . . and appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (iii. 13, 14). For the success of His mission Jesus trusts not to impression on the many but to possession of the chosen few. From the first His thought goes beyond "disciples" to "apostles," His messengers and envoys during His earthly ministry, but most of all when the brief days of that ministry should be ended. While He lived they were *disciples*, learners, to whose training a large proportion of His recorded so-called "public ministry" was devoted. The name "apostle" occurs once only in Mark (vi. 30), but the thought runs all through the story of the disciples. Hence the importance, for the under-

standing of the purpose of Jesus, of noting carefully whom He chose and the methods by which He patiently sought to fit them for their allotted task; to change these disciples into the Apostles who became the foundation of His Church.

16. **Simon.** Afterwards head of the Apostolic band: see iii. 16, where the surname *Peter* first occurs, explained Matt. xvi. 18 (the Aramaic equivalent *Cephas* is confined to John i. 43, 1 Cor., and Gal.).

Andrew. In the Synoptics simply named as the brother of Simon Peter: some material for a character sketch is afforded by three references in John: i. 41, vi. 8, xii. 22.

17. **fishers of men.** Compare Jer. xvi. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 26: a figure freely adopted for our Lord and His Apostles in early Christian art and literature. See the "Hymn to Christ the Saviour," by Clement of Alexandria, "Fisher of men who are saved," etc. Luke (v. 10) gives a corresponding promise addressed to Simon, "From henceforth thou shalt catch (lit. "take alive") men," the same word as in 2 Tim. ii. 26.

18. The impression conveyed is of the wonderful attractive power of Jesus. His bare call to two strangers is sufficient to effect an instant and amazing revolution in their lives. This vivid impression is not to be toned down by supposing the writer to be aware of a previous call in Judæa (John i. 35–42): see note on last section.

19. Another pair of brothers in another boat, mending, or, as this would rather be done on shore, preparing their fishing gear for the next night's work.

James and John. According to Luke v. 10

"partners with Simon." The three became the innermost circle of the disciples (v. 37, ix. 2, xiv. 33): Andrew is linked with them to form the *first* group of four in each list of the Twelve; also at xiii. 3.

20. The same imperious call; more perhaps to leave, yet the same instant obedience.

Luke's story (v. 1–11) has considerable variations and additions. On the whole, it seems easier to regard the two accounts as records of the same *fact*, in spite of their differences, than as records of separate facts in spite of their essential likeness.

Mark i. 21–34.

A SABBATH IN CAPERNAUM.

I. In the Synagogue (vers. 21–28; cf. Luke iv. 31–37).

21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.
22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.
23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean
24 spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy
25 One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy
26 peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came
27 out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

Mark *opens* his story of the Ministry by a vivid account of the doings of a single day. Luke has the whole of this, but *precedes* it by a brief statement of the teaching and the fame of Jesus, and by His rejection at Nazareth (iv. 14–30); Matthew begins with a general summary of the Ministry (iv. 23–25), leading on to the Sermon on the Mount, an insertion which involves some displacement and shortening of the incidents as they occur in Mark, this scene in the synagogue being omitted. A most convincing picture of the amazing impression at once produced by the word and the power of Jesus.

21. **Capernaum.** The first mention of the seaboard town, home of Simon and Andrew (ver. 29), which became the centre of the Galilæan ministry. The most definite statements of this are in Matthew (iv. 13 and ix. 1, "his own city"); it is implied also at Luke iv. 23, x. 15.

22. **doctrine.** R.V., "teaching." It is significant that this Gospel, which recounts so vividly the wonderful *deeds* of Jesus, preserving but little of His *words* in parable or discourse, should yet, as its first scene of His public ministry, describe the effect produced by His teaching. The significance is heightened by the absence of any indication of what He taught. Two strokes complete the picture: He taught, and men were astonished. It is no marvel that they were amazed at His miracles (ver. 27, ii. 12, iv. 41, v. 20, vi. 51, vii. 37), for the authority of *command* was visible in its outward effects: this instant recognition of the

authority of *truth* brings us nearer to the secret of Christ's power over men. The response of His hearers was less to the unrecorded teaching than to the Teacher. His words came with irresistible sense of a *personal* authority, gracious (Luke iv. 22) yet commanding, claiming surrender as unquestioning as that of the first disciples to His call. Thus this scene, like the last, brings us at the outset face to face with an ultimate fact, the personal authority of Jesus Christ.

the scribes. The official exponents of the Law; hence called also "lawyers" (*e.g.* Luke vii. 30) and "teachers of the law" (Luke v. 17). Their teaching consisted in the recital of the sayings of the Rabbis, so burying O.T. Scripture under a mass of lifeless tradition.

23. **a man with an unclean spirit.** The first instance of that mysterious malady to which so large a part of our Lord's ministry of healing was directed. No doubt many of the symptoms point to natural disease, especially to epilepsy and hysteria, but they were ascribed to unclean or evil spirits, demons, who could enter into and be expelled from human beings and even brute beasts (v. 13). The N.T. records may to some extent be influenced by this contemporary belief; yet the impression they give is not simply that Jesus accommodated Himself to the belief for the sake of the cure, but shared it. Unless we recognise *some* moral and spiritual fact behind the physical ill, much of the narrative loses meaning, and one perplexity is only exchanged for another. It will be wise, without prejudice, to let the story speak for itself.

24. The significant thing in this first encounter

with a demoniac is that the demons know that in Jesus they have met their master: the expected command is a voice of God, before which they will be powerless. So again v. 7; compare iii. 27.

Let us alone. R.V. omits. Compare Luke iv. 34, where R.V. rightly renders this Greek word as an interjection, "Ah!"

what have we to do with thee? Lit., "What (is there) to us and to thee (in common)?" Again at v. 7. The representative of God can have no business with the powers of evil, or, if any, then only to destroy them. The plural "we" seems to mark the case as typical, "we demons": the sequel deals with this one unclean spirit.

Jesus of Nazareth. Lit., "the Nazarene." An appellative occurring again, x. 47, xiv. 67, xvi. 6: here in contrast with the Divine title which follows.

to destroy us. A true intuition: compare Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 8.

Holy. The word has O.T. associations of separation and consecration to the service of God, and so stands in absolute antithesis to the "unclean" spirit. For its application to *Christ* compare Luke i. 35; John vi. 69; Acts iii. 14: to *Christians*, "saints," Rom. i. 7, and often.

25. **rebuked.** The word is almost confined to the Synoptics (except 2 Tim. iv. 2; Jude 9), implying generally both censure and command. Jesus rebukes not the demons only, but the storm and the fever (iv. 39; Luke iv. 39), as if these too were personal forces hostile to mankind.

Hold thy peace. Lit., "Be muzzled." Same word at iv. 39, "Be still." This stern command for

silence has reference to the spirit's recognition of Jesus as Messiah: see n. on ver. 34.

26. A final paroxysm: compare ix. 26.

torn. Rather, "convulsed," as R.V. marg.

27. **amazed.** A deeper feeling than the "astonishment" of ver. 22: this fresh manifestation of the authority of Jesus struck them with *awe*. The word is characteristic of Mark, and the impression conveyed by it may be gathered from the instances, x. 24, 32, and, with intensive prefix, ix. 15, xiv. 33, xvi. 5, 6.

What thing, etc. R.V., "What is this? a new teaching!" The stress is still on the *teaching*. Whatever the devices employed by the Jewish exorcists (Matt. xii. 27; Acts xix. 13), Jesus uses none of them. His bare word suffices; the same strange authority which had claimed His listeners is no less valid over the spirit-world. Luke uses "word" in both connections (iv. 32 and iv. 36).

28. R.V., "And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about." Mark interrupts his story for a moment to emphasise the immediate and widespread effect of what had happened in the synagogue. So Luke (iv. 37), but he has discounted the importance of the statement here by a similar one at the outset of his narrative (iv. 14). For the development of Mark's history it is important to note that the instant popularity of Jesus, as a teacher, and especially as one able to cast out demons, is attributed to this one incident. What Jesus thought of this will appear shortly.

A SABBATH IN CAPERNAUM—(*continued*).

II. Cure of Peter's Wife's Mother (vers. 29–31; cf. Matt. viii. 14, 15 = Luke iv. 38, 39).

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue,
they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with
30 James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a
31 fever, and anon they tell him of her. And he came and
took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately
the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

The first demand upon the healing power of Jesus had, in a manner, been forced upon Him by the sudden disturbance in the synagogue; the second meets Him in the trouble He finds in His friends' home, and proves that He can not only cast out demons but cure other sicknesses as well. The effect of this further discovery is seen in the gathering of the crowds round the house after sunset.

30. **fever.** The nature not indicated. Luke's expression suggests that the illness was severe, "held in the grip of a great fever."

anon. R.V., "straightway." See n. on ver. 10.

tell. Simpler than Luke's "besought": it was enough to tell Him about her.

31. In the method of His cure Jesus calls for some co-operation on the part of the sufferer. This feature does not appear in Matthew, "he touched her hand," or in Luke, "he rebuked the fever."

ministered. *I.e.*, "waited on them." A graphic touch: the cure so complete that the interrupted household duties were at once resumed.

A SABBATH IN CAPERNAUM—(*concluded*).

III. Cures after Sunset (vers. 32–34; cf. Matt. viii. 16, 17 = Luke iv. 40, 41).

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him
all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with
33 devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door.
34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and
cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak,
because they knew him.

The events of the day were followed, as soon as the close of the Sabbath permitted, by a scene with which Jesus must now become familiar wherever He went (see ver. 45, iii. 10, vi. 53–56, etc.). Whether He wished it so or not, His reputation as a wonderful healer was made. Crowds gathered to the fame of His cures, under the impulse of bodily need, with an appeal to His compassion which could only be met at a cost of time and strength out of all proportion to the spiritual effects produced. The turn thus given to His ministry at the first may well have excited in Jesus a foreboding afterwards realised in His judgment on this same city of Capernaum: exalted to heaven by the mighty works done in her streets, she repented not. His own hand writes failure over His efforts for His own city.

32. **when the sun did set.** The eagerness of the people to put to the proof the news which had reached them from the synagogue and from Simon's house is only restrained by the law of the Sabbath. Luke, perhaps less accurately, "when the sun was setting."

devils. *I.e.*, "demons." The common N.T. term for these evil powers, subjects and emissaries of Satan (iii. 22).

33. **all the city.** A vivid picture peculiar to Mark. Similarly at ii. 2.

34. **divers diseases.** An expression which each Synoptic has here, and nowhere else. The intention is, without details, to bring home the great variety of the cures wrought by Jesus.

suffered not to speak. Luke here repeats what we had at ver. 24, that as the demons came out they shrieked, "Thou art the Son of God." Such advertisement Jesus consistently avoided (see n. on ver. 11), whether from demons (iii. 11, 12) or from men (viii. 30). It is not the source of the confession that matters, but the confession itself, in its inevitable effect upon His public work. He could only fulfil His mission as Messiah by avoiding the grooves of the popular conception, and fixing men's thoughts not on Himself but on the kingdom of God. If rumours that He was the Christ went before Him they could only hinder His message, leading to the futile speculations and baffled expectancy so vividly portrayed in the Fourth Gospel. Therefore, neither admitting nor denying the suggestion, He checks every endeavour to spread it abroad.

knew him. Luke adds, "to be the Christ," and so R.V. marg. here.

Matthew finds in this scene one of the happiest of his fulfilments of the O.T. Scriptures: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases" (Isa. liii. 4).

Mark i. 35–39; cf. Luke iv. 42–44.

RETIREMENT FROM CAPERNAUM.

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he
went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there
36 prayed. And Simon and they that were with him
37 followed after him. And when they had found him, they
38 said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto
them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach
39 there also: for therefore came I forth. And he preached
in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out
devils.

The scenes of popular enthusiasm with which the Sabbath had closed impel Jesus to leave Capernaum before daybreak, secretly and alone. After the strain, He stood in need of solitude and prayer. The work of healing, begun only after sunset, must have left many applicants unsatisfied: the morrow would bring them back with many more, and one city would monopolise His ministry. But another reason for withdrawal is evident in the misgivings already suggested by vers. 25 and 34. The day which began with teaching had become wholly absorbed in curing sick people: the next day would certainly be like it if He so permitted. Did the true fulfilment of His mission lie in such work, with its attendant popularity? An instant decision must be taken: it is confirmed in prayer, and leads Him away from the sick folk of Capernaum to *preach* throughout all Galilee. The stress of the incident lies in the prominence it restores to His preaching. Jesus seems to have regarded the casting out of demons also as part of His spiritual work, and gives this power to His disciples when He sends them forth

to preach (iii. 15, vi. 7). But in the other cures which from this point occur in the history, perhaps we may see the compassion of Jesus breaking through a limitation He had Himself imposed upon His ministry.

35. Matthew omits this incident. A comparison with Luke (iv. 42–44) gives a good instance of Mark's characteristic vividness of description.

prayed. One of Mark's *three* instances of Jesus praying (vi. 46, xiv. 32): Matthew gives *two* (xiv. 23, xxvi. 36; see also xix. 13); Luke *seven* (iii. 21, v. 16, vi. 12, ix. 18, 28, xi. 1, xxii. 41).

36. **Simon.** In whose house He had perhaps spent the night. In Luke the "multitudes" come to Him.

followed after. Lit., "hunted him down," the very word implying resentment at the action He had seen fit to take.

37. **All men seek for thee.** R.V., "All are seeking thee." The natural and, surely, most desirable consequence of the doings of the previous day. Could it be wise or right to let such an opportunity pass without gathering its full fruits?

38. The reply of Jesus states one reason for His withdrawal and suggests another. (1) He chooses the itinerant method for His ministry, by which He can best reach all, favouring none. It is to have, for His disciples' sake as well as His own, the stamp of the country and not of the city. (2) His main business is to preach the gospel.

towns. Lit., "village-towns." The large villages (as distinct from the "city" of Capernaum) with which Galilee was thickly studded. The word only occurs here in the N.T.

came I forth. *I.e.*, from Capernaum. The same word rendered "went out" in ver. 35. Luke gives a different and probably less original turn to this saying, "for therefore am I sent," R.V. "was I sent," *i.e.*, from God. The emphasis which this version of our Lord's answer lays on *preaching* as His proper work is suggestive, but at this point of the story the disciples were hardly as yet prepared for such an assertion of the Divine origin of His mission.

Mark i. 40–45; cf. Matt. viii. 1–4 = Luke v. 12–16.

A LEPER CLEANSED.

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and
kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt,
41 thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with
compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and
42 saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he
had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him,
43 and he was cleansed. And he straitly charged him, and
44 forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, See thou
say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to
the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which
45 Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he
went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze
abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more
openly enter into the city, but was without in desert
places: and they came to him from every quarter.

Although Jesus had left His work of healing that He might be free to preach, the only incident which Mark records of His journey in Galilee is a

cure so wonderful that it must have the very effect He had tried to avoid. This appears in the strict injunction given to the man, and in the sequel. All the more there shines out the compulsion laid upon the compassion of Jesus by human need and the appeal of distress. Matthew and Luke also have the story: Mark excels both, especially Matthew, in fulness and vividness. The only other specific instance in the Gospels of this kind of cure is that of the ten lepers (Luke xvii. 12–19); but compare the charge to the Twelve (Matt. x. 8) and the message to John the Baptist (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 22).

40. **a leper.** Luke has, "a man full of leprosy," a phrase probably intended to indicate the hopeless severity of the case, though just possibly suggesting that the man was ceremonially "clean," and so was able with impunity to approach Jesus (Lev. xiii. 13). The ten of Luke xvii. 12 "stood afar off."

If thou wilt. Lit., "If thou shouldst be willing." The man's only misgiving, taught him by cruel experience.

make me clean. Lit., "cleanse me." The word, rather than "heal" or "cure," suggests terrible associations of physical and legal defilement. See Lev. xiii.

41. **moved with compassion.** Peculiar to Mark at this place: compare vi. 34, viii. 2, ix. 22, and for other interpretations of the emotions of Jesus, ver. 43, iii. 5, x. 21. (Some editors admit to their margin an alternative reading, "being angered," a startling anticipation of the emotion of ver. 43.)

touched. The act of personal contact with

which so many of Christ's cures were accompanied, both in common belief and in fact (iii. 10, v. 23, 27–31, vi. 5, 56, vii. 33, viii. 22, 23: compare 2 Kings iv. 34, v. 11). Jesus is not here deterred from it by the character of the disease or fear of legal defilement.

be thou clean. R.V., "made clean," and so ver. 42. It is true, and quite irrelevant, that in Lev. xiii. this verb is repeatedly used in the sense "to *declare* (ceremonially) clean." The narrative (see vers. 42, 45) implies a marvellous *cure*, not a legal pronouncement which Jesus had no right to make, and which would do the man no good if He did. Even his cure was not complete till he obtained the priest's certificate.

43. **straitly charged him, and sent him away.** R.V., "strictly (marg. "sternly") charged him, and sent him out." Neither rendering quite conveys the urgency of the man's dismissal. The word "straitly charged" pictures the *emotion* of Jesus: transferred from its literal significance of the snorting of horses, it comes to imply strong mental agitation, of indignation or anger, as Mark xiv. 5; John xi. 33, 38 (see R.V. marg.). This sense is to be looked for in the only other N.T. instances of the word, here and in a similar context at Matt. ix. 30. The urgency of the word rendered "sent away" has already been noted at ver. 12: other instances are v. 40, ix. 47, xi. 15, xii. 8. The plain meaning, then, seems to be, "In indignation against him he immediately drove him away." The impulse of compassion and the ready act of healing are followed by apprehension of a renewal of that peril for His work from which His withdrawal from Capernaum

was an escape, and the sequel shows that the apprehension was well founded.

44. Compare v. 19, 43, vii. 36, viii. 26.

go thy way. Up to Jerusalem.

offer for, *i.e.* concerning, "in the matter of thy cleansing." The details of the sacrifice are given in Lev. xiv.

for a testimony unto them. *I.e.*, to the official guardians of the Law whom "the priest" represented. The coming of the man to offer his sacrifice is the evidence necessary to secure the certificate of cure. That is his first duty, to be done for his own sake (compare Luke xvii. 14), and, in doing it, he will incidentally be kept from harming his benefactor. In the later incident recorded by Luke, the ten were cured as they were obeying a like command (Luke xvii. 14).

45. The excitement of having such a tale to tell is too much for his obedience or gratitude; so again at v. 20 and vii. 36. Accordingly Mark tells that the plans of ver. 39 had to be abruptly changed, and a deeper retirement sought, but sought in vain, in desert places. From this point the thronging multitudes are a constant feature in the scenes of the Ministry (*e.g.* ii. 2, iii. 7, 8, 20, iv. 1, v. 21, vi. 31, etc.). He "could not be hid" (vii. 24).

the city. R.V., "a city." Any and every place where a crowd could gather was, for the time, avoided.

Mark ii. 1–12; cf. Matt. ix. 1–8 = Luke v. 17–26.

CURE OF A PARALYSED MAN.

And again he entered into Capernaum after some days;
2 and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about
3 the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which
4 was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the
5 bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins
6 be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes
7 sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins
8 but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?
9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy
10 bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the
11 sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy
12 bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Although Jesus had withdrawn from Capernaum that He might preach, the only recorded incident of His tour is the cleansing of the leper, with its consequent increase of His popularity. And now, immediately on His return, a like claim is made

upon His power as a healer, and is so met that all are amazed and glorify God. The details of the scene are not only vivid and convincing, but present several new features, significant for the development of Mark's story. These are: (1) the first clear emergence of "faith"—in this case vicarious faith—in its connection with our Lord's response to human need; (2) His claim, made in an unexpected context, to forgive sins; (3) the first note of hostility to Jesus; (4) a miracle wrought not simply from compassion for the sufferer but in proof of His challenged prerogative; (5) the earliest instance of our Lord's self-designation as "Son of man." All these are common to the three accounts (cf. Matt. ix. 1–8; Luke v. 17–26).

1. **in the house.** Rather, "at home," or "indoors."

2. **he preached** (R.V., "spake") **the word.** Jesus is now able, after the break caused by His withdrawal, to gather a crowd in Capernaum to listen to His message. Luke, however, adds at the outset of this incident that "the power of the Lord (*i.e.* Jehovah) was with him that he should heal." This early use of the simple phrase "*the* word" is noteworthy: it occurs again in iv. 14, where Matthew has "the word of the kingdom," Luke "the word of God."

3. **sick of the palsy.** Lit., "a paralytic." Luke, "a man who was paralysed." The case was probably one of complete loss of power in the lower limbs: other references to the same disease are Matt. iv. 24, viii. 6; Acts viii. 7, ix. 33.

4. Checked in their approach by the dense crowd, they mount the outside stairs to the flat housetop (so Luke; cf. Mark xiii. 15), remove the

tiles (Luke), break up (lit. "dig out") the ceiling underneath, and let down the pallet with its burden on to the clear space at the feet of Jesus (who perhaps was teaching in the "upper room"). "They believed that neither din while He preached, nor rubbish falling among His audience, nor the strange interruption of a patient and a litter intruded upon His discourse, could weigh as much with Jesus as the appeal on a sick man's face. And this was faith" (Chadwick).

5. **When Jesus saw their faith.** This Gospel has instances of the necessary connection between men's confidence in Jesus and His power to bless in v. 34, 36, ix. 23, x. 52, and especially vi. 5, 6. A *vicarious* faith avails also for the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke vii.; cf. John iv. 46–53) and of the daughter of the Syrophœnician woman (Matt. xv. 28).

Son (so Matthew, with the addition "be of good cheer"). Lit. "Child." A gracious address, not only condoning the interruption, but making its way right to the man's need with promise of help. Compare "Daughter" (v. 34) and, to the disciples, "Children" (x. 24), "Little children" (John xiii. 33).

thy sins are forgiven. An unexpected word, to the sure explanation of which we hardly have the key. It seems to ignore the urgent necessity, in the very moment of its hard-won appeal, in order to declare and meet a different need, and so far, even if from the first our Lord intended to cure the man, may be regarded as another instance of His refusal to be a *mere* healer (see notes on i. 32–39). In the sequel the cure is wrought, not simply out of compassion and for its own sake, but in response to challenge, as proof of the validity of His claim

to forgive sins: He bestows the lesser gift that men may believe He can bestow one immeasurably greater. Further, there may have been something in this man's history known to Jesus which led Him to trace the physical malady to sin, and deal first with cause rather than symptom. Of such connection in His thought there are other hints: see John v. 14; Luke xiii. 16, "whom *Satan* hath bound," and, especially, His cures of those possessed with demons. But He also expressly teaches that these hints must not be fashioned into a doctrine that all physical evil is the result of sin: see Luke xiii. 1–5; John ix. 1–3.

6. **scribes.** See n. on i. 22. The first indication that the new religious movement had become important enough to be watched by the official leaders of Judaism. Luke speaks of a large and representative gathering of these (v. 17).

reasoning. The word habitually refers to perverse and hostile thoughts (vii. 21, viii. 16, ix. 33, xi. 31).

7. R.V., "Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth." The blasphemy is that a mere human fiat should usurp the Divine prerogative of forgiveness which was commissioned to His appointed ministers after prescribed ritual of expiation. On two other occasions the same charge was brought against Jesus for a yet higher claim: see John x. 30–33; Matt. xxvi. 63–65.

9. The question is accommodated to the point of view of His critics, to whom "seeing was believing." But for Him whose word was truth, to speak the word of forgiveness was to forgive; and this, assuredly, was not easier than to heal, but involved a Divine prerogative, a "power" or rather an

"authority" on earth which came from and was ratified in heaven.

10. **the Son of man.** The first of fourteen instances of the title in this Gospel: ii. 28, viii. 31, 38, ix. 9, 12, 31, x. 33, 45, xiii. 26, xiv. 21 (*bis*), 41, 62. It will be observed that only two of these occur in the first half of the Gospel, and that the third follows immediately upon Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ" (viii. 29). This of itself suggests—and the later passages confirm the suggestion—that the phrase is a synonym for "the Christ," our Lord's chosen designation of Himself as Messiah, chosen, no doubt, because of the emphasis it gave to all the human side of His nature and mission as well as to their Divine origin and authority. This Messianic application has its source in the vision of Dan. vii. 1–14, where, after the passing away of four great world-empires, cruel and ferocious as the brute beasts by which they are symbolised, the advent of the "everlasting kingdom" to be given "unto the saints of the Most High" is thus described: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man." Our Lord clearly refers to this passage in xiii. 26, xiv. 62, and the absence of any questioning as to what the title meant would seem to imply that, originally describing the Messianic *kingdom* as human in contrast with the brutish kingdoms of earth, it had come to be transferred to the *king*, and was in our Lord's day a current name for the personal Messiah.

But the evidence seems clear that even to His disciples He only confessed Himself to be the Christ after they had made the great discovery for

themselves, viii. 29–31 (see n. on i. 11). If so, His use of the Messianic title here (unless the incident belongs to a later period of the Ministry) creates difficulty. It is possible that the records sometimes put the familiar title into His mouth when He simply said "I": it can hardly be doubted that Mark viii. 27, "Who do men say that *I* am?" is more original than Matt. xvi. 13, "Who do men say that *the Son of man* is?" But, as in Aramaic the phrase "a son of man" means simply "man," it would seem likely that this is the phrase He used here. So at least, according to Matthew, the people understood Him, glorifying God "which had given such power *unto men*" (Matt. ix. 8.) Not, of course, to *all* men: the wonder is that in *this* man the human has been exalted to the divine. (See also n. on ver. 28.)

(**he saith,** etc.). A similar *parenthesis* has place in each account, showing a source used in common.

11. The man must co-operate in his cure: cf. n. on i. 31.

12. Each Evangelist in his own way records the same overmastering amazement.

Mark ii. 13–17; cf. Matt. ix. 9–13 = Luke v. 27–32.

THE CALL OF LEVI, THE PUBLICAN.

13 And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the
14 multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me.
15 And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass,

that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples:
16 for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he
17 eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The great claim to forgive sins is followed by four scenes in which Jesus asserts a fearless independence of current religious sentiment: each enshrines some characteristic saying, and the series is closed by a plain declaration of war on the part of the Pharisees.

13. **again.** The word appears to look back to i. 16. From this point many scenes in His ministry have the lake shores for their setting.

14. **Levi.** Luke adds "a publican"; Matthew has "a man called Matthew," in what is evidently a record of the same incident. This, and the fact that each list of the Apostles contains a Matthew but no Levi, serve to identify the two. If *Matthew* ("gift of God") was a later name, we have an analogy in Simon *Peter*.

receipt of custom. R.V., "place of toll." He was collector (for Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee) of custom duties on goods passing through Capernaum on the high road between Damascus and the Mediterranean.

Follow me. See notes on i. 16–20.

15. **in his house.** *I.e.*, Levi's. Luke speaks of a great feast in honour of Jesus.

publicans and sinners. The two classes

are linked together in Luke vii. 34, xv. 1. By "sinners" in this connection are meant "men of the world," outside the pale of official religion with its observances and duties. The association shows the religious element in the popular hatred of the "publicans" (a Roman term for collectors of *public* revenue). Not only were they extortionate (Luke iii. 13, xix. 8), but their very business was sign and symbol of Israel's subjection to a heathen power: they were renegade Jews (see Matt. xviii. 17, "Let him be to thee as the Gentile and the publican"; cf. also Matt. v. 46, xxi. 32).

there were many. The reference seems to be to the publicans and sinners (numerous in so important a commercial centre as Capernaum), and to the attraction this outcast section of the community had already found in the ministry of Jesus (cf. Luke vii. 29, xv. 1).

16. R.V., "the scribes of the Pharisees." *I.e.*, the scribes (i. 22, note) who belonged to the strict sect of the Pharisees or "separatists," the men who stood uncompromisingly for the separation of the Jews from everything non-Jewish and, as means, for the most scrupulous observance of the Law and tradition. This legalism brought them as a class into sharp conflict with Jesus; but it is to be remembered that they included a Nicodemus, a Gamaliel, and a Saul.

How is it, etc. Probably this question should be reduced to the outraged exclamation, "He eats with publicans and sinners!" (see R.V. text and marg.). The inclusion of an individual publican among His disciples might possibly, under protest, have been condoned: this open association with the class is a scandal. Yet, is it a lurking sense of

shame and duty neglected that makes them address the remonstrance to the disciples and not to the Master? In the following question as to a detail of religious observance they come to Him direct.

17. **physician.** An illuminating definition of the function of a religious teacher, setting at once in clear light the action of Jesus and the foolish estimate of it which would suggest that a physician of souls should hold aloof from the very people who need him.

I came, etc. The definition of the mission of Jesus also marks out its objects, the sinners, banned as outcasts by respectable religion, and therefore its condemnation. In the word "righteous" Jesus takes the Pharisees at their own valuation: they can have no need of Him, but these others have. Nor does He simply wait the appeal, but Himself "calls" (lit. "invites" as to a feast): cf. Luke xiv. 13, and the parable which follows; also Matt. xi. 28; Luke xix. 10.

to repentance. R.V. omits, and also in Matt. ix. 13. The words are found in Luke v. 32, but are hardly appropriate in this context of free and gracious intercourse with the despised publicans and sinners. In Matthew's account the contrast between the religion of the Pharisee, with no gospel in it for the lost, and the gracious ministry of Jesus, is pointed by the quotation from Hosea vi. 6, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. ix. 13; cf. also xii. 7).

Mark ii. 18–22; cf. Matt. ix. 14–17 = Luke v. 33–39.

A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING.

18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast
19 not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot
20 fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those
21 days. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away
22 from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

Jesus has vindicated His mission to the despised and outcast. But to accomplish this, need He and His disciples dispense with existing religious forms, the frequent observance of fasting and prayer (Luke)? The question comes first from the disciples of John, and is perplexed rather than hostile. For in His call to repentance and moral revival Jesus had but taken up the burden of John's ministry. Yet the earlier movement remained one within Judaism: while denouncing the hypocrisies of Pharisaism, John and his disciples were still strict observers of Pharisaic tradition. On this point, then, the Pharisees find unexpected allies, and the united challenge leads to a fuller disclosure of the spirit and the requirements of the new faith. It is prob-

able that the whole section has primary reference to the perplexity of the disciples of John.

18. R.V., "And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting," *i.e.*, were then observing one of the traditional fasts. (Matthew and Luke have the general statement "fast often.") The Law enjoined only an annual fast, on the Day of Atonement; tradition had added many ("twice in the week," Luke xviii. 12), with ostentatious signs of mourning (Matt. vi. 16).

19. Fasting is right and good only if real: it may become unreal through incongruity with the spirit of the religion of which it professes to be a manifestation. Jesus was preaching the good tidings of the kingdom of God, healing the sick, welcoming publicans and sinners. As well might those responsible for the prolonged and joyous feastings of an Eastern wedding suddenly betake themselves to fasting, as the adherents of so glad a ministry!

children. R.V., "sons of the bride-chamber." An Aramaic expression for friends of the bridegroom, "groomsmen," responsible for the arrangement and success of the wedding festivities, which might extend over seven or even fourteen days (Judg. xiv. 17; Tob. viii. 20).

20. Did these words as spoken by Jesus simply belong to the illustration, assuming perhaps a deeper significance to His disciples as they recalled them after His death? Or were they spoken with reference to Himself, involving a prevision of the Cross? If so, He identifies Himself with the bridegroom of the illustration, and His choice of this term has seemed to many to involve a notable claim, for this is the figure by which the O.T. prophets repeatedly describe *Jehovah's* relation to

His people: see Hos. ii. 19, 20; Isa. liv. 5; and cf. Matt. xxv. 1–13; John iii. 29. It may be doubted, however, whether any such reference is here intended, or whether a forecast of His death naturally has place in this first period of the Ministry: see viii. 31. And would He suggest to His disciples that when He was gone was their fit time for mourning? See Luke xxiv. 6, 25, 52. The words seem rather an added touch to the picture. Even for the sons of the bride-chamber there will be a time to fast as well as a time to feast: it may come for His disciples as, indeed, it has already come for those of John, whose master has been taken from them (i. 14). So, while justifying His followers, He yet refrains from condemning their critics, and even, perhaps, sympathises with them in the experiences out of which their questions arose (see n. on ver. 22).

21. The thought widens out from the specific question of fasting to the general relation of the religion of Jesus to existing religious forms. The illustration just used assumes that the spirit of His ministry is *glad*, and therefore incongruous with the symbol of mourning: the two parabolic sayings which follow assume that it is *new*, and that its expanding life can only be cramped into worn-out forms at peril of disaster both to old and new.

R.V. (following an amended text), "No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made."

The patch of harsh unbleached cloth shrinks, and tears away the edges of the old. The inconsiderate attempt to reform is not only fruitless,

but makes what it seeks to mend worse than before.

In the Lukan form of this parable both the absurdity of the action and the consequent mischief receive additional emphasis. A new *garment* is cut up to mend an old: the new one is ruined, and the old is nothing improved by its unsightly patch. The simpler and less extravagant version would seem to be original.

22. **bottles.** R.V., "wine-skins." Hard and worn thin by use, with no strength to resist the pressure of the fermenting wine: cf. Josh. ix. 4, 13.

new wine . . . new bottles. R.V., "new wine . . . fresh wine-skins." Different Greek words for *new*; the former meaning new in time, just made; the latter, new in quality.

The parable differs from the other one in speaking of a *double* injury from the attempt to combine new and old. There were many who still found in the forms of Judaism the vehicle of a true religious life: those especially who had welcomed the moral revival under John the Baptist would feel that the old, so far from being done away, was vitalised anew. For them, any partial adoption of the practices of Jesus and His disciples would be inconsistent and harmful. Jesus does not condemn them. There is a third parabolic saying in Luke in which He seems, with sympathetic understanding, to accept the attitude of John's disciples: "And no man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, The old is good." But for all this, Christianity was not to be a reformed Judaism. This danger beset it later, and brought upon the Apostle Paul the great controversy of his life. The new faith must, untrammelled, work

out its own destiny, make its own forms, choose and mould its own instruments. Jesus could say of John, "Among them that are born of women there is none greater," but in the same connection He must also say, in fidelity to His own mission, "He that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he," and with all sympathy for the struggle and the choice between old and new, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me" (Luke vii. 18–35; not in Mark, but an illuminating comment on this section).

Mark ii. 23–28; cf. Matt. xii. 1–8=Luke vi. 1–5.

FIRST SABBATH CONTROVERSY.

23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields
on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went,
24 to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto
him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that
25 which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye
never read what David did, when he had need, and was an
26 hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he
went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar, the
high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful
to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were
27 with him? And he said unto them, The sabbath was
28 made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore
the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

The two Sabbath incidents which follow are common to the three Synoptics (Matt. xii.; Luke vi.): two others are found in Luke (chaps. xiii., xiv.), and two in John (chaps. v., ix.). For the amazing

development of the law of the Sabbath in Rabbinic tradition see Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Appendix xvii. Jesus again recalls from ceremonial observance to spirit and reality, and makes His appeal to those instincts of humanity which a callous legalism had set aside.

23. **pluck.** Held by the Rabbis to be *reaping*, and therefore forbidden (Ex. xxxiv. 21). Luke adds, "rubbing them in their hands," a further sin of *threshing*.

24. **not lawful.** Lawful in itself (Deut. xxiii. 25), but not on the Sabbath. How can one with any pretensions to be a religious teacher have so failed in needful instructions to his disciples?

25. An appeal from perverted tradition to their own Scriptures (cf. xii. 10, 26, 36; Matt. xix. 4, xxi. 16). Matthew clinches the argument here by two additional O.T. references (xii. 5, 7).

26. The incident is found in 1 Sam. xxi. 1–6, and occurred under Ahimelech, not his son Abiathar.

27. A saying preserved by Mark only. The Sabbath is not to be regarded as an institution which is independent of man, and which man was born into the world to observe. It "was made," or, rather, "came into existence," for man's sake, and is subject, therefore, not to unreal scruples and artificial restrictions, but to human necessities. We may be sure that Jesus had profound regard to the sacredness of the Sabbath: He does not set aside its Divine sanction, but interprets it. And there is no peril in accepting the frankly humanitarian ground on which He bases Sabbath observance, if at the same time we accept His estimate of human needs. There are needs—mental, physical, social—which claim a day of

rest. These, wisely interpreted, may appeal to His authority, but the appeal runs fatally short if those deeper, religious needs are overlooked which claim a day of *worship*.

28. A saying found in each of the three accounts, but most pointed in Mark, who alone has **therefore** and **also** (or "even").

the Son of man. The phrase creates a similar difficulty to that in ver. 10. The context does not at all lead up to the assertion that Jesus Himself, as Messiah, has authority over the Sabbath: He is vindicating the action of the disciples, not His own in permitting them to pluck and eat. We must again, therefore, regard the phrase as equivalent to "man." Man, for whom the Sabbath was made, is its **lord**, or, rather, its "owner," to use it as his true needs dictate.

Mark iii. 1–6; cf. Matt. xii. 9–14 = Luke vi. 6–11.

SECOND SABBATH CONTROVERSY.

And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was
2 a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath
3 day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the
4 man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they
5 held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was
6 restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

In this incident as in the last Jesus appeals from tradition to principle, from a pitiless formalism to instincts of humanity. Two new features present themselves: a hostile watching of Jesus, in the hope that He might put Himself within the power of Jewish Law (so too in Luke: in Matthew a direct challenge is substituted for the watching), and, as the sequel, a determination to destroy Him.

1. **withered.** Shrunk and wasted. This infirmity is mentioned only here in the Synoptics: from John v. 3 it would seem to have been common. Compare the story of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii. 4–6).

2. **accuse him.** *I.e.*, to the Sanhedrin. They were convinced of the compassion of Jesus and of His marvellous powers as a healer, but prejudice, under guise of religious scruple, leaves them unimpressed. The climax of such deliberate hardening of the heart appears in vers. 22–30.

4. In the case of actual danger to life, Rabbinic law permitted the necessary "work" in the use of remedies forbidden in any lesser emergency. In Matthew (xii. 11) Jesus makes explicit appeal to this humane provision (cf. Luke xiv. 5); so here, in asking whether it is lawful "to save a life." But He prefaces this by a question as to which their law gave no guidance, yet which went to the heart of the matter. **Is it lawful to do good?** The humane impulse, if valid in the one instance, is valid everywhere, greater than the "religious" scruple which would check it.

5. This searching **look** of Jesus is recorded on four other occasions in Mark's graphic story (ver. 34, v. 32, x. 23, xi. 11), elsewhere only in this same context in Luke (vi. 10). Possibly a reminiscence

of Peter, who had cause to remember another look of his Master (Luke xxii. 61).

anger. Justified by its cause and its accompaniment of sorrow.

hardness. R.V., "hardening." A deliberate, gradual process. The original word applies to things moral and spiritual a figure derived from the ossification, the becoming bony, of softer animal tissues: the same metaphor underlies our word "callous." Again at vi. 52, viii. 17.

6. **The Herodians** (named again at xii. 13) were a political party whose hopes for their nation centred in a restoration of the monarchy under the dynasty of the Herods. An unnatural alliance between worldly policy and religious strictness, inspired by a common hatred and a common fear lest this new enthusiasm should thwart their aims.

Mark iii. 7–12; cf. Matt. iv. 23–25, xii. 15–21; Luke vi. 12–19.

GREAT MULTITUDES GATHER TO JESUS.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea:
and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from
8 Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from
beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great
multitude, when they had heard what great things he did,
9 came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a
small ship should wait on him because of the multitude,
10 lest they should throng him. For he had healed many;
insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as
11 many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they

saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou
12 art the Son of God. And he straitly charged them that
they should not make him known.

The declared hostility against Jesus leads to His withdrawal from the town to the seashore, where He becomes the object of a great demonstration of popular enthusiasm. His answer both to enmity and to unsought notoriety is the appointing of the Twelve (vers. 13–19).

8. The Galilæan multitude is now increased by crowds from the South, the East, and even the far North. But it was the fame of Jesus as a wonder worker, not as a teacher, that had drawn them together.

9. The superstitious desire to touch Jesus put Him in actual bodily danger. The **boat**, provided for escape, was afterwards used as a pulpit (iv. 1).

10. **plagues.** Lit. "scourges" (same word as Acts xxii. 24), sickness being viewed as Divine chastisement: again at v. 29, 34.

12. See note on i. 34.

Mark iii. 13–19a; cf. Matt. x. 2–4; Luke vi. 12–16.

THE APPOINTING OF THE TWELVE.

13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him
14 whom he would: and they came unto him. And he
ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he
15 might send them forth to preach, and to have power to
16 heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: and Simon he
17 surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and
John the brother of James; and he surnamed them
18 Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: and Andrew,

and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and
19 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him.

See notes on i. 16–20. The time has come when in face of opposition and an embarrassing popularity Jesus determines to multiply His activities, especially of preaching, through chosen messengers. Luke tells us that the choice was made after a night spent in prayer (vi. 12), and was followed by the "Sermon on the Plain," omitted from Mark's Gospel.

13. **a mountain.** R.V., "the mountain." The high ground rising from the shores of the lake.

14. **ordained.** R.V., "appointed." The language is finely suggestive of the essential conditions of Christian service—the Master's call, the Master's companionship, then the Master's commission to preach.

15. R.V. omits **to heal sicknesses and,** limiting the commission to preaching and expulsion of demons: see notes on i. 35–39.

16. **Peter.** The Greek form of the Aramaic name actually bestowed, **Cephas,** "a rock." According to Matthew, the name was conferred in response to his confession (xvi. 18).

17. **Boanerges.** Only named here. The word is a perplexity to scholars: probably "sons of thunder" is rather a paraphrase than an accurate translation. For justification of the title see ix. 38; Luke ix. 54.

18. The disciples of this verse are, in the Synoptics, mere names: in the Fourth Gospel, **Andrew, Philip,** and **Thomas** assume some little

prominence, and it is possible that **Bartholomew** ("son of Tolmai") appears there in his own name of **Nathanael.**

Thaddæus. In Luke, "Judas the son of James."

Canaanite. R.V. "Cananæan." An Aramaic word, for which in Luke's lists (vi. 15; Acts i. 13) we have the Greek equivalent, "the Zealot." The title suggests that this Simon was a member of the fanatical sect of Zealots, extremists in observance and defence of the Jewish Law: possibly, however, it marks personal character, uncompromising zeal for truth and right.

19. **Iscariot.** *I.e.*, "man of Kerioth." His father, Simon, was of the same town (John vi. 71, R.V.).

betrayed. The shameful deed has attached itself to the very name, and so repeatedly throughout the Gospels: cf. "one of the twelve" (xiv. 10).

Mark iii. 19b–30; cf. Matt. ix. 32–34, xii. 22–45; Luke xi. 14–32, xii. 10.

ACCUSATION AND REPLY.

19 and they went into an house. And the multitude cometh
20 together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.
21 And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold
22 on him: for they said, He is beside himself. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out
23 devils. And he called them unto him, and said unto them
24 in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot
26 stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided,
27 he cannot stand, but hath an end. No man can enter into

a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.
28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall
29 blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal
30 damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Yet another picture of the unbounded enthusiasm which the doings of Jesus excited, and two judgments upon Him, one of misunderstanding, the other of malignant enmity. The accounts in Matthew and Luke are more extended.

19b, 20. Mark's setting of the scenes which follow. Even "at home" no privacy or chance to take a meal.

21. Peculiar to Mark. His family, who have known Him in the quiet home at Nazareth, cannot understand the reports that reach them. Surely this is madness, needing the restraint and care of His kinsfolk? So, troubled, they start for Capernaum: the sequel appears in vers. 31–35.

22. Influential religious leaders have come down to see and to condemn. They cannot deny the supernatural cures, but can at least assert them to be the work of the devil.

Beelzebub. Apparently an opprobious name for Satan, prince of the demons, derived from the story of Ahaziah's idolatry in inquiring of Baal-zebub ("Lord of flies"), the god of Ekron (2 Kings i.).

23. Jesus exposes the logic of their reckless assertion under two parables or comparisons, a kingdom rent by civil war, a household weakened by dissension and strife. That is the condition of affairs in Satan's kingdom if, as they say, he is using his power to expel his own subordinates: to

fight against himself in this way would be self-destruction, and is unthinkable.

27. The true meaning of His cures, obvious to any not blinded by prejudice, is that a stronger than Satan has broken his power.

28. **Verily.** The first instance of this formula, used to introduce a solemn warning. It shows how deeply Jesus was moved by the accusation.

sins and blasphemies. The second term refers to the aggravated guilt of irreverence and presumption against God. Even this may be repented of and forgiven.

29. To see the beneficent works of Jesus, to acknowledge their reality and supernatural power, and yet to be so filled with prejudice and hatred as to dare ascribe them to Satan and to declare that this wonderful caster out of demons is Himself possessed by the mightiest demon of all, what is this but to **blaspheme against the Holy Ghost,** the very Spirit and Source of all good? Such sin has no place for repentance, leaves Jesus no further ground of appeal. For it means the final denial of good and the enthronement of evil in its place: it is to say, with Milton's Satan,

> "All good to me is lost.
> Evil, be thou my good."

And the man who has lost all sense of good cannot repent or be forgiven; his **sin** is **eternal,** persisting unchanged and unchangeable into the world to come.

is in danger of eternal damnation. R.V., "is guilty of an eternal sin." It is not a question of a possible danger of punishment, but of actual guilt of irremediable sin.

30. An editorial note, explaining what was the sufficient cause that moved Jesus to utter so terrible a warning. This suggests—what has sometimes been forgotten in their interpretation—that such words are not to be isolated from their context, but estimated as a judgment upon this venomous hatred of good for its own sake. So, too, the declarations of Heb. vi. 6, x. 29 are prompted by the persistent and fierce apostasy which the writer describes. We may suppose the "sin unto death" (1 John v. 16) to have some similar reference; but all these passages rather warn us to be on our guard against the insidious beginnings of "sin against the light," than invite to vain speculation as to the point at which the sin becomes an unforgivable blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Mark iii. 31–35; cf. Matt. xii. 46–50 = Luke viii. 19–21.

THE TRUE KINSFOLK OF JESUS.

31 There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing
32 without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother
33 and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered
34 them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and
35 said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

The sequel of ver. 21. Jesus is still in the house, but the scene of bitter strife has changed to one of absorbed interest in His teaching. Just when, for the moment, every hindrance to the free exercise

of His ministry was removed, there comes this intervention of His own family. Their mistaken claim can only be put aside by the assertion of a deeper kinship with all who do the will of God. Thus Jesus Himself experienced the pain of renunciation, as well as the blessedness to which He summoned His followers (x. 29; cf. Matt. x. 34–39).

35. **do the will of God.** Here only in Mark, an isolation which throws into more impressive relief this ultimate purpose of our Lord's life and ministry. In Matt. vii. 21 it appears as the test of a professed loyalty to Christ. Other significant instances are the clause in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 10) and the victory of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 42), while in the Fourth Gospel the phrase comes into new prominence.

Mark iv. 1–34.

TEACHING IN PARABLES.

I. The Parable of the Sower (vers. 1–9; cf. Matt. xiii. 1–9 = Luke viii. 4–8).

And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude
2 was by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doc-
3 trine, Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:
4 and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way
5 side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of
6 earth: but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and
7 because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell

among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and
8 it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and
did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought
forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.
9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him
hear.

Mark now calls attention to a characteristic feature of the teaching of Jesus, and gives instances. It was in **parables.** The truths concerning the kingdom of God were set forth under *similitudes*, concrete, vivid, familiar, drawn from actual or possible experience. When, for example, Jesus wanted to bring home the conviction that the kingdom He had but begun to establish was destined for universal empire, He invites His hearers to look round for a *comparison*: "How shall we liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth?" (ver. 30), and instances the astonishing growth of the tiny mustard seed. No form of teaching would seem more suited to appeal to an Eastern crowd: it is not without some perplexity that we learn that the transparent simplicity of these parables proved to be a veil, hiding, even designed to hide, the truth beneath (see notes on vers. 10–12).

1. Compare iii. 9. By this time crowds gather not only to His cures but to His teaching, attracted no doubt by its fresh and vivid simplicity.

2. **doctrine.** R.V., "teaching." Mark emphasises (again in ver. 33) the habitual use of parable, then gives *three* examples. Matthew in the same context (chap. xiii.) has *seven*.

parables. Mark has already recorded two (ii. 21, 22), and has once used the word of an illustrative saying (iii. 23; cf. vii. 17). After this

section he gives only one extended parable (xii. 1–9).

3. **Hearken.** A summons to attention, fitly introducing this first and outstanding instance of His parables: here in Mark only (cf. vii. 14).

4. **the way side.** The hard road at the edge of the field into which the seed could not sink.

fowls. Old English for "birds" (R.V.).

5. **stony ground.** R.V., "the rocky *ground*." A familiar feature of cornfields on the hills of Galilee. The thin layer of earth on the underlying rock gets more than its share of heat and transient moisture, and growth in it is rapid. But the roots cannot strike downwards, and one day of the Eastern sun withers the plant.

7. **thorns.** R.V., "the thorns." Said to be the plague of the farmer in the East as weeds are with us, outstripping the green blades in growth, and depriving them of the nourishment, light, and air needful for fruition.

8. R.V., "thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold." Compare Gen. xxvi. 12.

9. A solemn repetition of the "Hearken" of ver. 3: even more impressive in Luke (viii. 8, "He cried, He that hath ears," etc.).

TEACHING IN PARABLES—(*continued*).

II. Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower (vers. 10–20; cf. Matt. xiii. 10–23 = Luke viii. 9–15).

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him
11 with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of

the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all
12 these things are done in parables: that *seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and*
13 *their sins should be forgiven them.* And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will
14 ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word.
15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately,
16 and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive
17 it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are
18 offended. And these are they which are sown among
19 thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh
20 unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

So far as His public teaching is concerned, Jesus leaves such parables as the one just recorded, as well He might, to convey their own lesson. His more immediate followers, however,—the Twelve and others,—seem to have found them difficult to understand, and asked for and received an explanation. The same contrast is repeated at vers. *33*, *34*. It would be easy to understand that Jesus should expound more fully to His disciples those truths of the kingdom which He set in simple picture-form before the multitude. It is doubtless true, also, that such picturesque teaching might attract

and interest the careless, yet fail to make any lasting impression, revealing and also concealing the truth. But these considerations do not quite explain the narrative as it stands. This suggests, not that the parabolic form was chosen as at least the best chance of conveying truth in homely guise to the multitude, to be supplemented by fuller instruction to the disciples, but that it was chosen for its obscurity; its very *purpose* was to conceal the truth except from the privileged few to whom the needful interpretation was vouchsafed. Thus a perplexing turn is given to this story of teaching in parables: it remains to be seen whether first impressions are modified in more detailed exposition.

10. **the parable.** R.V., "the parables."

11. **mystery.** Only in this context in the Gospels; elsewhere only in Paul (21 times) and in Revelation (4 times). It means *secret*, truth not necessarily obscure, but hidden, and made known to men only through Divine revelation. Here, "the mystery of the kingdom of God" stands for the whole gospel as proclaimed and wrought by Christ. The conception is characteristically Pauline.

12. Taken literally, this verse affirms that Jesus in speaking His matchless parables had a *purpose* which it is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute to Him, least of all in the bright and hopeful days of the Galilæan ministry. In Matthew's account the substitution of "because" for "that" changes the blindness of the people from an end in view to a present cause for the parabolic method; but even so, the association of our Lord's fresh and vivid parables with the dulness of His hearers is not without its perplexity. The words are a reminiscence of an O.T. Scripture quoted in full by

Matthew. In Isaiah's account of his call (Isa. vi.), written down, it may be supposed, after years of experience of the reception of his preaching, he declares, with terrible irony, that God's very *commission* to him was to prevent the people from accepting his message. He was to say to them, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not": he was to make their heart fat, and their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes. The Divine purpose through him was one of retribution and judgment, as well as ultimately of mercy and salvation. Now the early Christian Church found itself in a position like that of the prophet. It had to confront the fact that the Jewish nation as a whole had rejected the Christ. Paul deals with the problem in Rom. ix.–xi., and in justifying the ways of God falls back on this same prophetic word and similar O.T. Scriptures (cf. also Acts xxviii. 25). That is, before the Synoptic Gospels were written, Christian thought was absorbed with the tragic fact of the rejection of Christ, and the fact had become firmly linked with Isaiah's prophecy. This is confirmed by the later evidence of the Fourth Gospel (see John xii. 37–40). If it may be added that, in pondering the high themes connected with the death and resurrection of Jesus, the records of His Galilæan teaching may have fallen somewhat into the background and lost something of their fresh simplicity, it was but another step to account for the failure of the people to understand Him by the *parables* in which He taught, and to see in this the fulfilment of a Divine purpose. Perhaps, therefore, though at some later period our Lord may have applied these words of Isaiah in sad irony to the results of His

own teaching, the use made of them just here is hardly historical, but has taken form from the natural play of after-reflection (of Pauline type) upon the facts of His ministry. This explanation is in part confirmed by the use of Paul's word "mystery," by the next verse, and by the apparent discrepancy of statement in vers. 33, 34 (see notes).

13. Interpretation of the parable has just been admitted to be necessary and conceded by special privilege to the disciples. Why, then, this surprise at their dulness of understanding? The verse would join on more naturally to ver. 10. And the alternation of public teaching, private conference, public teaching again, is not very clearly indicated, and can scarcely belong to the history of a single day, as is implied, however, by ver. 35. A similar difficulty arises in regard to the sequence of Matt. xiii. 1–35, suggesting that the interpretation of the parable, with the question which led to it, may come from another context.

14–20. The interpretation speaks for itself, and is instructive in its *brevity* and its *restraint*. The parable is not an *allegory*, in which each detail is significant; it is a *simile*, which illustrates, lights up, some one main spiritual truth by a counterpart in nature or familiar human experience. A trace of allegorising appears here (*e.g.* "the sower soweth the *word*," and in the identification of the birds with Satan), but is only incidental to the expression. In substance, just as the sower scatters some seed on ground which from various causes is unproductive, so the teacher must expect to meet with unreceptive minds, eager yet shallow minds, preoccupied minds, as well as with minds receptive and fruitful. The parable is one of warning and

of hope, speaks of disappointment and failure, summons to watchfulness, yet ends with the joy of assured and abundant harvest.

TEACHING IN PARABLES—(*continued*).

III. Parabolic Warnings (vers. 21–25; cf. Matt. v. 15, x. 26; Luke viii. 16–18, xi. 33, xii. 2).

21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put
under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a
22 candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be
manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it
23 should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let
24 him hear. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye
hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to
25 you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For
he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not,
from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Mark (followed by Luke viii. 16–18, but not by Matthew) appends to the interpretation of the Parable of the Sower a little group of parabolic sayings, which he apparently regards as a warning to the disciples to guard and use the trust of the teaching just committed to them. The connection is perhaps due to the Evangelist: the repeated formula, "And he said" (vers. 21, 24), and the occurrence of the sayings in other connections suggest the use of some collection of detached utterances of our Lord. Compare with ver. 21 Matt. v. 15, Luke xi. 33; with ver. 22, Matt. x. 26, Luke xii. 2; with ver. 24, Matt. vii. 2, Luke vi. 38; and with ver. 25, Matt. xiii. 12, xxv. 29, Luke xix. 26.

21. R.V., "the lamp . . . the bushel . . . the

bed . . . the stand." A picture of any peasant's home and its furniture.

22. The "mystery" of the kingdom of God was hidden only that in due time it should be disclosed. It is now made known to His disciples: theirs the responsibility to place it where its light may shine.

23. A repetition to the disciples, with deeper significance, of the summons to attentive hearing already addressed to the multitude (ver. 9).

24. The heedful hearer gains a possession of the truth which enables him to give it in turn to others. And by imparting it freely in a faithful, unselfish ministry he enters into still larger possession of it. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more."

25. Capacity, gift, attainment all grow by use, perish by neglect.

TEACHING IN PARABLES—(*continued*).

IV. The Seed growing of itself (vers. 26–29).

26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should
27 cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up,
28 he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full
29 corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Mark alone, who omits so much of our Lord's teaching, has preserved this parable. It has points of similarity with the Parable of the Tares,

but the lesson is quite distinct. Human effort is contrasted with the Divine working. Man sows, and reaps; all between is the business of the seed itself and the soil, which is to say, of God. The sower—whether of wheat or of the word of the kingdom—has committed his seed to higher powers, unseen but inevitable in their operation, and may leave it with them, assured of the harvest to come.

27. Not anxiously watching the seed, but going about his daily task.

29. **is brought forth.** R.V., "is ripe"; R.V. marg., "alloweth." The Greek word is of uncertain meaning.

putteth in. R.V. marg., "sendeth forth," *i.e.* sends out his reapers.

Probably no stress is to be laid on this verse as a prediction of the Second Advent: it rather belongs to the picture of the two stages of human toil, separated by an interval in which man can and need do nothing.

TEACHING IN PARABLES—(*concluded*).

V. The Mustard Seed (vers. 30–34; cf. Matt. xiii. 31–35; Luke xiii. 18–21).

30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of
31 God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:
32 but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.
33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto

34 them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

The last parable spoke of untended, gradual but certain growth; this asserts the vast outward expansion of the kingdom from almost imperceptible beginnings. In Matthew and Luke it is linked with a picture of inward diffusion, the Parable of the Leaven, which so far as it teaches of hidden, spontaneous growth conveys the same lesson as the "seed growing of itself."

30. **comparison.** R.V., "in what parable shall we set it forth?"

32. The other accounts speak of its becoming "a tree" and of the birds lodging in the branches thereof. Either version, with some poetical exaggeration, fairly represents the facts (see *Hastings' Bible Dict.*, art. "Mustard"). The one point is the amazing development of a tiny seed.

33. **as they were able to hear it.** The phrase suggests that Jesus taught in parables because that sort of teaching was what the people could understand. The next verse, however, returns to the point of view of ver. 12, and this is emphasised by Matthew, who omits this phrase, and finds in the teaching by parables a fulfilment of an O.T. Scripture referring to utterances in "parables and dark sayings" (Matt. xiii. 35; cf. Ps. lxxviii. 2). For a possible explanation see n. on ver. 12.

Mark iv. 35–v. 43.

A GROUP OF MIGHTY WORKS.

I. The Stilling of the Storm (iv. 35–41; cf. Matt. viii. 18, 23–27 = Luke viii. 22–25).

35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto
36 them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when
they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as
he was in the ship. And there were also with him other
37 little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and
the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.
38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a
pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master,
39 carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and re-
buked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still.
40 And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And
he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that
41 ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said
one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the
wind and the sea obey him?

After telling how Jesus taught, the Evangelist passes on to describe the mighty works which He did.

His narrative has already given prominence to wonderful cures, but now he groups together four incidents in which the manifestation of the Divine power of Christ far transcends anything yet recorded of Him. In turn He asserts His mastery over the forces of nature, demoniac possession of the most aggravated kind, secret wasting disease, death itself. Yet, with all the wonder of it, each story has a naturalness and a sobriety which stamp it as history: the total effect is most impressive for

the reader's estimate of the powers of Jesus and of the motives by which their exercise was controlled.

35. The precise note of time and the detail that, without landing again on the crowded shore, the boat from which Jesus had taught leaves for the eastern side of the lake are peculiar to Mark.

36. **other little ships.** R.V., "other boats." The same word as just used. Some eager listeners tried to follow, but were perhaps driven back by the storm. Mark only.

37. Mountain lakes are peculiarly subject to sudden and violent winds.

full. R.V., "was now filling."

38. **a pillow.** R.V., "the cushion." Either as used by the rowers, or, more probably, as placed in the stern for the comfort of passengers.

Master. Lit. "Teacher." Each Evangelist has here a different Greek word as the equivalent of the Aramaic "Rabbi."

The appeal is softened down in Matthew, "Save, Lord, we perish," and in Luke, "Master, Master, we perish."

39. **arose.** R.V., "awoke."

rebuked. See n. on i. 25.

Peace, be still. Lit., "Become silent, be muzzled" (see i. 25). Only Mark preserves this word of command.

ceased. Lit., became weary and sank to rest: a beautiful figure. Cf. the well-known lines of Mrs. Hemans ("Fear was within the tossing bark")—

> "And slumber settled on the deep,
> And silence on the blast;
> They sank, as flowers that fold to sleep
> When sultry day is past."

40. R.V., "Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?" Still no faith, after months of companionship with the Master (cf. viii. 17)? Matthew (who puts the rebuke before the miracle), "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"; Luke, "Where is your faith?"

The "faith" has often been interpreted as meaning confidence in Jesus: with Him the disciples should have known that they were safe. Perhaps, however, He rather summons them to share His own absolute trust in God, the master-secret of His life, keeping Him calm and undismayed in every crisis of His fortunes. In this view the interpreting passage for this and similar sayings is xi. 22, "Have faith in God." This interpretation leaves untouched every lesson of comfort and strength from the Master's companionship, if we are also companions of His faith. Indeed, since He is the Revealer of God, the two conceptions of faith in God and faith in Him are not two but one: to trust God is to trust Him, faith in Him is faith in God.

41. Not yet the confidence of faith, but one fear replaced by another. The disciples, at least, had no manner of doubt that they had witnessed a stupendous miracle, which to the sailors among them would appeal with irresistible force. So, with an awe which the cures of the sick and the possessed had not awakened, they whisper one to another as they get to their oars again, **Who then is this?**

A GROUP OF MIGHTY WORKS—(*continued*).

II. The Gerasene Demoniac (v. 1–20; cf. Matt. viii. 28–34 = Luke viii. 26–39).

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the
2 country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out
of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a
3 man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among
the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with
4 chains: because that he had been often bound with
fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked
asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither
5 could any man tame him. And always, night and day,
he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and
6 cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar
7 off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud
voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou
Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that
8 thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out
9 of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him,
What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name
10 is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much
that he would not send them away out of the country.
11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great
12 herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him,
saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into
13 them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the
unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and
the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea,
(they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the
14 sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city,
and in the country. And they went out to see what it
15 was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see
him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion,
sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were

16 afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to
him that was possessed with the devil, and also concern-
17 ing the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out
18 of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he
that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he
19 might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but
saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how
great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had
20 compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to
publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for
him: and all men did marvel.

The miracle just recorded was new in kind: this is new only in degree. The fierceness of the possessed and the strange circumstances attending his cure made an indelible impression, which is preserved in this full and vivid narrative (greatly abbreviated by Matthew).

1. **Gadarenes.** So in Matthew. Here and in Luke the best authorities have "Gerasenes," while in all three Gospels there is a variant reading, "Gergesenes." Both Gadara and Gerasa were cities of Decapolis (ver. 20), but the former was six, the latter thirty miles from the lake. The spot is now generally identified with another Gerasa, the ruined Kersa on the east of the lake: this may (as Matthew suggests) have been included in the territory of Gadara.

2. **tombs.** Niches hewn out of the rocks: haunted, in popular belief, by evil spirits.

6. Perhaps a first impulse of fury, changed as he drew near to Jesus into sudden awe.

7. Compare i. 24, iii. 11. The protest here is in *response* to the command of Jesus (ver. 8, "For he had been saying unto him").

9. The matter-of-fact question would quiet for the

moment the man's frenzy: if he could give his own name he would so far recover the self-identity which he had lost. But he answers in the name of the demons.

Legion. The Roman regiment of some 6000 men, the very symbol of pitiless, irresistible, destroying force.

10. The man as spokesman of the demons (in the other accounts the demons themselves) recognises that the command must be obeyed, and makes a strange request. Luke substitutes for **out of the country,** "into the abyss," the hell which was the proper abode of evil spirits. Perhaps there is a vague confusion in the man's consciousness of his own dread that he shall be driven from his home in the mountains and tombs, and of the fear of this vast army of demons that they may be left homeless.

11. **swine.** Unclean and forbidden to the Jews, but east of the lake Gentile influence was strong. The story gives no hint that our Lord punished the owners as breakers of the Law.

13. It is difficult to take this literally and vain to follow the innumerable discussions to which it has given rise. The observed fact was a sudden stampede of the swine to their destruction, caused perhaps by a final terrifying paroxysm of the possessed (cf. ix. 26). This might well convince the man that he was free, and help to restore him to sanity. Tradition would find a grim satisfaction in imagining that the unclean spirits entered into the unclean swine, only to find their fate in the "abyss" (often used of the deep sea) from which they had schemed to be delivered.

14. The sequel is very natural, and is told with vivid simplicity.

15. **clothed.** Luke viii. 27, "for a long time he had worn no clothes."

in his right mind. An interesting suggestion of the connection between possession and lunacy.

17. A natural request, prompted, as Luke tells us, by "great fear" rather than by resentment. If Jesus had come to the eastern side with any intention of preaching there, His purpose was effectually hindered.

19. It would not at all help Jesus and His disciples in their work to have with them this restored demoniac. "*Legion* could not so quickly be changed into an Apostle" (Loisy). For his own sake it would be well for him to realise the permanence of his cure in familiar scenes and without the protecting presence of his Deliverer. But a ministry was open to him which was closed to Jesus. Long ago he had a home and friends: let him return, that they may see the marvel of his recovery and listen as he tells what God in His mercy had done for him. It is there, and not in more public ways, that one so lately delivered from the degrading power of Satan may bear seemly and effective testimony.

the Lord. *I.e.*, Jehovah (not Jesus). Luke has "God."

20. The man obeys, with a difference. His commission was to tell his friends; he proceeds to publish (lit. herald, preach) the matter "throughout the whole city" (Luke), and even through Decapolis. He was to see in his cure the power and mercy of *God*, but he thinks only of what *Jesus* had done for him. A difference of the Greek tense in the "hath done" of ver. 19 and the "had done" of ver. 20 suggests that, bidden to lay stress on the

abiding change in himself rather than on the story of what befell on the hillside, he chose to tell and re-tell the details of that story till men were agape with wonder. His message was lacking in reserve and in truth; and in both because it lacked obedience.

Decapolis. The ten-city-land, originally a league of ten Greek cities in Eastern Palestine: again at vii. 31.

A GROUP OF MIGHTY WORKS—(*continued*).

III. The Daughter of Jairus (Part I. vers. 21–24; cf. Matt. ix. 18, 19 = Luke viii. 40–42).

21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was
22 nigh unto the sea. And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw
23 him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed;
24 and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

The separation of this story into two parts by the healing of the woman on the way, makes it at once more natural and more impressive. The summons is urgent, but Jesus can afford to tarry; the miracle is stupendous, but the narrator, knowing of Whom he wrote, has no undue sense of wonder which would hurry him along to the climax. This is the only miracle of raising from the dead common to the Synoptics. Luke records the resurrection of one already being carried to the grave (vii. 11–17), John of one dead four days (xi. 1–44).

21. Luke pictures this crowd of Capernaum waiting to "welcome" Jesus on His return.

22. There would be several synagogues in Capernaum: **Jairus** was the president of one of these, responsible for order and the arrangements for services.

23. Luke says "an only daughter, about twelve years of age": cf. ver. 42.

at the point of death. So Luke, "lay a dying." Matthew has "My daughter is even now dead," but this is due to his great curtailment of the narrative and omission of the later message to Jairus (ver. 35).

A GROUP OF MIGHTY WORKS—(*continued*).

IV. The Woman with the Issue (vers. 25–34; cf. Matt. ix. 20–22 = Luke viii. 43–48).

25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve
26 years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered,
27 but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus,
28 came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.
29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.
30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and
31 said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and
32 sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round
33 about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all

34 the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Jairus was convinced that if Jesus would lay His hands upon his daughter she would live, and of this healing touch Mark has already given instances (i. 31, 41). He has also told (iii. 10) of the crowds pressing upon Him in the belief that to touch Him was to be cured; later on we have the distinct statement that all who thus touched even the border of His garment were made whole (vi. 56). But that was with the knowledge and permission of Jesus. The great venture of this shrinking woman's faith was made and succeeded before He knew of it.

25. Her secret distress would be increased by dread of the Levitical law of uncleanness.

26. An uncompromising indictment, toned down by Luke (especially in R.V.), omitted by Matthew.

27. Matthew and Luke, "the border of His garment," one of the tassels (to which special religious significance was attached, Matt. xxiii. 5) on the four corners of the upper garment. The one on the loose corner thrown over His shoulder would be easily reached from behind.

29. **straightway.** See i. 10. **plague.** See iii. 10.

30. R.V., "And straightway Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power *proceeding* from him had gone forth, turned." He was conscious of the draft made by the touch of faith upon His store of healing energy.

32. **looked round.** See iii. 5. The "her" is from the narrator's standpoint: Jesus did not know

who it was until before His searching glance the woman stood revealed.

33. The claim of that look is stronger than her shame and fear. Luke emphasises still more strongly the publicity and completeness of her grateful confession.

34. **Daughter.** See ii. 5.

thy faith. See ii. 5. The mere touch a vain superstition; its efficacy in the faith, vague and timid, which impelled it. Other instances of this saying are found x. 52; Luke vii. 50, xvii. 19, xviii. 42.

go in peace. The beautiful Hebrew "Farewell."

be whole. In gracious response to her confession, the cure, already complete at the moment when she touched Him, is now confirmed.

A GROUP OF MIGHTY WORKS—(*concluded*).

III. (*cont.*). The Daughter of Jairus (Part II. vers. 35–43; cf. Matt. ix. 23–26 = Luke viii. 49–56).

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is
36 dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only
37 believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save
38 Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.
39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.
40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the

damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in
41 where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by
the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being
42 interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age
of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great
43 astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

35. That at such a moment thought should be taken for the convenience of "the Master" is suggestive of the reverence in which He was held.

36. R.V., "But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken." The word used means "to hear casually," and hence (1) to overhear, R.V. marg., (2) to pay no heed to, which is the sense in the only other N.T. instance (Matt. xviii. 17) and in the Greek O.T. On the whole, this usage should decide for R.V. Luke has simply "hearing it."

believe. *I.e.*, keep on believing in face of this greater demand on faith.

37. The eager crowd is bidden not to follow, and obeys. He and Jairus, with the three chosen companions of His most momentous experiences (cf. ix. 2, xiv. 33), pass on to the house of death alone.

38. Burial followed speedily on death: already the court was given over to the hired mourners, proportionate in number and in the vehemence of their lamentations to the social standing of their client. Jesus halts for a moment at the gate to survey the scene of tumult.

39. **not dead, but sleepeth.** This cannot

fairly be interpreted as throwing any doubt on the actual death: that is unmistakably implied in the narrative. The words are spoken out of the consciousness of Jesus that He was so soon to recall her to life that her death was indeed but as a sleep. The euphemistic description of death under the figure of sleep occurs in Greek and Roman literature: Jesus changed the figure into reality (cf. John xi. 11; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. xv. 20, etc.).

40. Professional mourning, touched on a tender point, changes to angry, scornful laughter. Luke adds, what the laughter itself implies, "knowing that she was dead." With authority Jesus ejected the jeering crowd, and with the five entered the room where the child lay.

41. Only Mark preserves the actual (Aramaic) words spoken by Jesus: *Tălĭthā cūm* (so R.V.), "Maiden, arise!" Compare *Ephphatha* (vii. 34).

42. The instant and complete return to life, with the bewildered amazement of those who witnessed it, are described with graphic simplicity.

43. See n. on i. 34. He will not be known as One who can raise the dead, nor must the child be treated as one miraculously restored to life. The matter-of-fact reminder that she is hungry suggests that the household is to resume its accustomed ways as if nothing had happened. Matthew omits the injunction to silence, and tells us, what we may well believe took place in spite of it (cf. i. 45, v. 20), that "the fame hereof went forth into all that land." Was it because of this that Jesus left Capernaum (vi. 1)?

Mark vi. 1–6 ; cf. Matt. xiii. 53–58 (Luke iv. 16–30).

REJECTION AT NAZARETH.

And he went out from thence, and came into his own
2 country ; and his disciples follow him. And when the
sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue :
and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From
whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is
this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works
3 are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the
son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda,
and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And
4 they were offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A
prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and
5 among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could
there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon
6 a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled
because of their unbelief. And he went round about the
villages, teaching.

Compare Matt. xiii. 53–58. Luke places a similar but more extended narrative at the outset of the Ministry (iv. 16–30), and some have supposed that Mark here tells of a *second* rejection. But the reference in Luke iv. 23 is hardly accounted for by the summary statement of vers. 14, 15, and rather suggests that the special ministry to Capernaum, which Luke only introduces at ver. 31, had already continued for some time. This, and the essential identity of situation, make it probable that Luke is following another account of the same event, choosing this undated incident as a significant introduction to the story he has to tell. Compare n. on i. 20.

1. **his own country.** *I.e.*, Nazareth (i. 9, 24).

2. In R.V. the final clause reads, "and *what mean* such mighty works wrought by his hands?" The stress of this threefold protest of an outraged sense of fitness lies on **this man,** a fellow-townsman of their own, of no note or social position. They knew that his family had been troubled by reports of his strange doings in Capernaum, but now his return home and his address in the synagogue press for some judgment on their part. And the worst of it is, that though knowing him to be a man of no account they cannot quite resist the spell of his wisdom and manifest power. This makes them uncomfortable and resentful. They are conscious of the claim of Jesus and of some dawning impulse of surrender, yet escape both the claim upon them and the instinct to yield by irrelevant questionings.

3. **carpenter.** Matthew (xiii. 55) seems to hesitate to use the term of Jesus, and has "the son of the carpenter." These are the only references to the trade of Jesus. Early Christian tradition speaks of His making "ploughs and yokes." As the Gospels have no mention of Joseph after the boyhood of Jesus (Luke ii. 41–51), it is supposed that he was now dead. Of the four brothers, James is known to us as afterwards head of the Church in Jerusalem, and both he and Jude as authors of Epistles which bear their names.

offended. Lit. "caused to stumble," tripped up by what might have proved their safety and deliverance. See the contrast in Rom. ix. 33.

4. A proverbial saying, akin to our "Familiarity breeds contempt." That to which we are accustomed—the innumerable best things of life which lie close to our hand—may lose all power of appeal and pass us by unheeded and unknown (compare

the historical warnings added by Luke, iv. 25–27). It was and is inevitable that Jesus Himself should be the supreme test of men's ability to discern truth, beauty, goodness, and of their willingness to respond. Compare His comment on the conflict of faith and reason which raged round the cure of the man born blind (John ix. 39–41).

5. See n. on ii. 5. This bold assertion of the impotence of Jesus in the absence of men's faith is toned down in Matthew (xiii. 58).

6a. A very human touch: comprehension of the reason for their feeling towards Him, yet a pained surprise. On another occasion He "wondered" at the unexpected boldness of a man's faith in Him (Matt. viii. 10 = Luke vii. 9; compare Matt. xv. 28).

6b. A brief record of a preaching tour: cf. the fuller notice at Matt. ix. 35.

Mark vi. 7–13; cf. Matt. ix. 35–xi. 1; Luke ix. 1–6 (x. 1–16).

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE.

7 And he calleth unto him the twelve, and began to send
them forth by two and two; and gave them power over
8 unclean spirits; and commanded them that they should
take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip,
9 no bread, no *money in their purse: but be shod with
10 sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto
them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there
11 abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall
not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence,
shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against
them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable
for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for

12 that city. And they went out, and preached that men
13 should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Compare notes on i. 16–20, iii. 13–19. Mark has just recorded the itinerant method of our Lord's own ministry. His pity was stirred by the greatness of men's need of Him (Matt. ix. 36–38: the words are placed by Luke in the later context of the mission of the Seventy, x. 2). A point has been reached in the training of the Twelve at which He can use them as His missioners: disciples became Apostles, carrying His message far and wide, and gaining the while for their future task the essential equipment of trust and self-reliance. They have seen the work of the Master: they are to learn under what conditions of service He can work through them. They are sent forth with a simplicity of outfit which means at once confidence in their Sender and absorption in their mission. Matthew has a much lengthier charge (x. 5–42); Luke records similar instructions to the Seventy (x. 1–16).

7. **two and two.** So afterwards Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, Barnabas and Mark. "Perhaps our modern missionaries lose more in energy than is gained in area by neglecting so humane a precedent" (Chadwick).

8. **scrip.** R.V., "wallet." A leathern bag for carrying food.

9. **coats.** Rather, inner garments or tunics. To wear two was needless luxury.

10. A lodging, once chosen, must suffice: cf. the fuller injunction of Luke x. 5–7.

11. **against them.** Rather, as R.V., "unto them."

An act, not of resentment nor even of judgment, but of symbolic warning of fellowship refused and of responsibility disavowed: cf. Luke x. 10, 11. The rest of the verse (**Verily . . . that city**) is rightly omitted by R.V.: cf. Matt. x. 15; Luke x. 14.

12. **repent.** They were "to preach the gospel" (Luke ix. 6) and proclaim "the kingdom of God" (Luke x. 11): Mark sums up their preaching in its first, essential message of repentance.

13. **oil.** A familiar remedy, here used as the symbol or medium of miraculous healing. The practice was adopted in the Church (Jas. v. 14), and in later ecclesiastical usage was transferred, as a *priestly* act of absolution, to the healing from sin, especially of the dying (extreme unction).

Mark vi. 14–29; cf. Matt. xiv. 1–12; Luke ix. 7–9 (iii. 19, 20).

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

14 And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread
abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from
the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth them-
15 selves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others
16 said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But
when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I
17 beheaded: he is risen from the dead. For Herod himself had
sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison
for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had
18 married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful
19 for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had
a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she

could not: for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.
And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.
And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.
And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.
And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oaths' sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

It is evident that the Twelve ascribed all their success to Him who had sent them forth. Thus the fame of Jesus became more widely spread: wonder led to various surmise that here, surely, was something more than human. John the Baptist, the prophet snatched away from the nation by murder, risen again with larger powers! Or even Elijah, promised herald of Messiah! Or at least one in whom the long silent voice of the prophets of Israel is heard once more, heralding a new era of national greatness! So persistent are

the rumours, that they penetrate to the court of Herod at Tiberias, where they would receive little heed were it not that the terrors of a guilty conscience invest one of them with dread significance. "John, *whom I beheaded,* he is risen." At this point Mark inserts, in explanation of Herod's fears, the episode of the murder of John (cf. n. on i. 14).

14. **king.** A courtesy title. Herod Antipas was Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa.

mighty works. R.V., "therefore do these powers work in him."

15. The belief in the coming of **Elijah** as precursor of Messiah, founded on Mal. iv. 5, is referred to in ix. 12, where Jesus declares the prophecy fulfilled in John the Baptist as forerunner of Himself.

or as. R.V., "*even* as."

16. The one popular opinion concerning Jesus which instantly finds an echo in the guilty soul of Herod: cf. viii. 28.

17. Josephus (*Antiq.* 18. 5) tells how Herod married **Herodias** in his brother's lifetime, divorcing his own wife, daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia. The **prison** was the fortress attached to the palace of Machærus, near the Dead Sea.

19. **had a quarrel.** R.V., "set herself against him." The word is of doubtful meaning, but seems to imply the unremitting, vengeful hatred of a resentful woman.

20. Herod's conscience was not so seared as not to recognise the justice of John's rebuke and the moral dignity of the man who dared to utter it in disregard of consequence.

observed him. R.V., "kept him safe," *i.e.* from the vengeance of Herodias. Cf. the attitude of

Ahab and of his wife Jezebel towards Elijah. Otherwise in Matthew (xiv. 5).

when he heard. On his visits to Machærus he would send for the prisoner (as Felix afterwards sent for Paul, Acts xxiv. 26), hearing him gladly, and (according to A.V.) even doing many things to which John prompted him.

did many things. R.V. (following another reading), "was much perplexed." The play of conflicting impulses and the weakness which finally entrapped Herod into a crime against which his better nature revolted are most true to life and impressive in their warning.

21. **a convenient day.** *I.e.*, for the execution of Herodias' well-laid plans. The excitement of the banquet, the flattering of Herod's pride by the rare entertainment provided for his guests—a princess degrading herself to the rôle of a hired dancer—had all been carefully calculated.

chief estates. R.V., "chief men." Cf. the English three *estates* of lords spiritual, lords temporal, and commons.

22. **the said Herodias.** R.V., "Herodias herself." A shameful emphasis: her own daughter sacrificed to her lust for vengeance on the man who had rebuked her sin.

23. Brave words in the mouth of a mere vassal of Rome! Cf. Esth. v. 3, 6, vii. 2.

25. **by and by.** *I.e.*, as R.V., "forthwith." The daughter (Salome, according to Josephus) shows herself a willing and eager accomplice of her mother's design. The scene of the banquet is apparently not Tiberias but the palace of Machærus.

charger. O.E. for a large dish.

29. Perhaps by invitation of the remorse-stricken

Herod. Matthew (xiv. 12) adds that John's disciples told Jesus, and that the news led to His withdrawal into a desert place: cf. Mark's reason for this retirement (vers. 30, 31).

Mark vi. 30–44; cf. Matt. xiv. 13–21 = Luke ix. 10–17 (John vi. 1–13).

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.

30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto
Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had
31 done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them,
Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a
while: for there were many coming and going, and they
32 had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into
33 a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw
them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot
thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came to-
34 gether unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw
much people, and was moved with compassion toward
them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd:
35 and he began to teach them many things. And when the
day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and
said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far
36 passed: send them away, that they may go into the
country round about, and into the villages, and buy them-
37 selves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered
and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say
unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth
38 of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them,
How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they
39 knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded
them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.
40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.
41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes,

he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the
42 two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all
43 eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full
44 of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

This incident from the Synoptic narrative is repeated, with some variations, by St. John, contrary to his wont and for the sake of the appended discourse on the Bread of Life. Matthew and Luke either compress Mark's account or, less probably, follow an independent source: the features peculiar to Mark are indicated below. There can be no doubt that he regards the occurrence as miraculous (vers. 43, 44), though, with a fine reserve, he does not dwell upon the miracle or the method of it. The beautiful and very human story bears the impress of truth in what it has to tell of the compassion and power of Jesus.

30. **apostles.** A name only here given by Mark to the disciples: it is now as *messengers* or *envoys* of Jesus that they return to Him. To report details of service to their Lord would deepen sense of responsibility and of dependence: it would also gain from Him an interpretation of what they had tried to do for Him, in its successes and its failures (cf. Luke x. 17–20).

31. The invitation suggests the increasing care of Jesus for the training of His disciples, and the necessity, for effective service, of intervals of quiet fellowship with Him (see n. on iii. 14). Mark only.

33. An ever growing crowd hastened on foot round the north end of the lake, outstripped the

heavily laden boat, and received Jesus as He landed on the eastern shore.

34. Hopes of retirement and rest baffled, yet no word of reproach; only a Divine compassion for the crowd, following Him by a vague instinct, not knowing what they want, but only sure in some unreasoning way that Jesus could satisfy their need. It is noteworthy that in response to their appeal Matthew speaks only of healing their sick, Luke of both teaching and healing, while Mark describes a day wholly devoted to teaching. Jesus gladly used the opportunity thus thrust upon Him to meet their most real want, the gospel of the kingdom of God.

35. Mark's gift of vivid narrative is specially noticeable in what follows. Comment is hardly needed.

37. Two hundred silver *denarii*, roughly some £10. Hospitality to such an extent was quite beyond the common purse. Mark and John only.

38. A responsibility is not to be evaded for lack of means, but faced with such means as we have.

39. A picture drawn from life: the orderly grouping of the people for convenient distribution of the food left an impression of rectangular garden beds (the word rendered "ranks"), perhaps coloured by the bright Eastern garments, set on the green slope of the hill. The details are peculiar to Mark: the "green grass" suggests the springtime, in accordance with John vi. 4.

41. The language is so closely similar to that of xiv. 22 that some connection between this meal and the Last Supper can hardly be absent

from the writer's mind. Though there is no word of the Johannine discourse on Jesus as the Bread of Life, the same truth underlies the whole story.

43. No disfiguring fragments must mar the scene of such a meal. From motives of orderliness and of thrift (John), each disciple goes round with the basket he usually carried; and when all the pieces were gathered up, every basket was full, although—the wonder of it!—five thousand guests had been satisfied with food.

Mark vi. 45–52; cf. Matt. xiv. 22–33 (John vi. 14–21).

WALKING ON THE SEA.

45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into
the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida,
46 while he sent away the people. And when he had sent
47 them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And
when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea,
48 and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling
in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and
about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them,
walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.
49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they sup-
50 posed it had been a spirit, and cried out: for they all saw
him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked
with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is
51 I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the
ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in
52 themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they con-
sidered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was
hardened.

Another instance of the Master's care for His disciples, as well as of His mastery over the

elements; cf. iv. 35–41. This sequel to the miracle of the loaves is given also by John, and by Matthew with the addition of Peter's attempt to go to Jesus on the waters.

45. A note of urgency, possibly to be explained by John vi. 15, but more safely, perhaps, by the imperative need that the lingering crowd should find shelter before nightfall. See n. on i. 14, 15.

to the other side . . . unto Bethsaida. The mention of the city (Mark only) creates a difficulty. For they were already near the only Bethsaida (Luke ix. 10) for which there is certain evidence, Bethsaida-Julias, in Gaulonitis, at the north-east angle of the lake; and this is the place intended in the only other reference to Bethsaida in Mark (viii. 22). Possibly, therefore, they were to cross "to the other side" of the little bay which separated the desert place of the meal from the city itself, and there wait till Jesus rejoined them, a purpose frustrated by the contrary wind which drove them into the middle of the lake. This, however, is not very clearly indicated in the narrative itself. The widely accepted conjecture of another Bethsaida, west of the lake, has some amount of support in the other N.T. references. Bethsaida-Julias was not, properly speaking, in Galilee; yet "Philip was of Bethsaida of Galilee" (John xii. 21), "the city of Andrew and Peter" (John i. 44); and Jesus links Bethsaida in the condemnation pronounced on Capernaum and Chorazin, cities of Galilee west of the lake. The point cannot be decided.

while he sent. R.V., "he himself." The pronoun is emphatic: at no other bidding could

the crowd be induced to leave their teacher and benefactor.

46. See n. on i. 35.

48. No actual peril as at iv. 37, yet they were **distressed in rowing** and the Master was not with them. Through the intervening miles of darkness He saw, and came.

fourth watch. 3–6 a.m.

would have passed by them. Mark only; the impression of an eye-witness.

49. They might have known Jesus well enough by this time to expect His help in spite of circumstance, and so be ready for the recognition and appeal for which He waited; but their response to His coming is a shriek of superstitious fear.

spirit. R.V., "apparition."

50. On the former occasion (iv. 40) the disciples were rebuked for their faithless alarm; now, though they have less excuse, their cry of dread elicits words of gracious reassurance, "Courage! It is I, your Master. Cease your fears." It is left for the Evangelist to make the appropriate comment (ver. 52).

52. The meaning is "they had not learnt the lesson taught them by the loaves." This amazing dulness seems to have impressed itself upon after-reflection; cf. viii. 17–21.

for. R.V., "but."

hardened. See n. on iii. 5.

Mark vi. 53–56; cf. Matt. xiv. 34–36.

CURES IN GENNESARET.

53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land
54 of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. And when they
were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,
55 and ran through that whole region round about, and
began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where
56 they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into
villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the
streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were
but the border of his garment: and as many as touched
him were made whole.

The old scenes of enthusiastic belief in the powers of this wonderful healer, repeated now on new ground (cf. i. 32–34, 45, iii. 7–12).

53. **Gennesaret.** A seaboard plain, south of Capernaum, some three miles long by one broad, noted for its fertility; cf. Luke v. 1.

56. See notes on v. 25–34.

Mark vii. 1–23; cf. Matt. xv. 1–20.

EATING WITH UNWASHEN HANDS.

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain
2 of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when
they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that
3 is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For
the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their
hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.
4 And when they come from the market, except they wash,
they eat not. And many other things there be, which
they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and

5 pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees
and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples accord-
ing to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with
6 unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them,
Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is
written, *This people honoureth me with their lips, but*
7 *their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship*
me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the
tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and
9 many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them,
Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may
10 keep your own tradition. For Moses said, *Honour thy father*
and thy mother; and, *Whoso curseth father or mother, let*
11 *him die the death:* but ye say, If a man shall say to his
father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by
whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be
12 free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father
13 or his mother; making the word of God of none effect
through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and
14 many such like things do ye. And when he had called all
the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto
15 me every one of you, and understand: there is nothing
from without a man, that entering into him can defile him:
but the things which come out of him, those are they that
16 defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him
17 hear. And when he was entered into the house from the
people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.
18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding
also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from
without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;
19 because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly,
20 and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And
he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth
21 the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, pro-
ceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness,
23 an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil
things come from within, and defile the man.

Mark has already recorded incidents in which the doings of Jesus and His disciples offended against the traditions of fasting and Sabbath observance. Now suspicion has deepened, information has been laid against Him in Jerusalem, the authorities there have sent some of their number to investigate, with the result that they formally charge the disciples with habitual disregard of obligations of ceremonial purity, imposed upon every Jew with the binding force of law. Jesus takes up the challenge, and after retort upon the hypocrisy of His accusers defines His own position not only to tradition but to the Law itself, in a revolutionary pronouncement of vital importance.

2. **defiled.** Lit. "common," the antithesis to "holy," which in its sense of *separate* was the very mark of the Jew as distinguished from the Gentile. Ceremonial ablutions, at first the symbol, had become the sole reality, prescribed and insisted upon with infinite detail of ritual, and without thought or care for the thing symbolised so long as the outward observance was scrupulously kept.

they found fault. These words should be omitted: the sentence is interrupted by the explanation of vers. 3 and 4, and resumed in ver. 5.

3. Mark's explanation for his Roman readers.

oft. R.V., "diligently." The word used is obscure, but probably means "with the closed fist," rubbed vigorously into the palm of the other hand, a bit of the prescribed ritual.

the tradition of the elders. Rabbinical

interpretation and expansion of the Law handed down orally from generation to generation, and invested with all the sacredness of Scripture itself.

4. **wash themselves** (R.V.). Lit. "baptize themselves," which the American R.V. renders "bathe themselves," referring to Luke xi. 38, where it has a similar rendering of the same word. This is probably correct: the extravagant requirement of immersion of the whole body in water to remove the ceremonial impurities contracted in the course of the day's business affords a climax, which the alternative reading "sprinkle themselves" (R.V. marg.) quite misses.

washing. Lit. "baptizings."

tables. An incorrect translation (suggested by the awkwardness of immersing a sofa) of a word meaning the "couches" on which they sat to meat. The best authorities for the text omit (so R.V.).

5. **walk.** No isolated act, but the habitual conduct of the disciples' lives is called in question. Can it be that they, under His teaching, deliberately set aside the whole "tradition" as having no claim, legal, moral, or religious, upon their obedience? For that means open declaration of war upon the Judaism of their time and its teachers.

6. Jesus flames out in sudden wrath against the accusers. **Hypocrites!** clinging to meaningless externals under the mask of religious earnestness: sense of moral realities so completely lost that the letter of their tradition meant everything to them, and God nothing. How admirably does the description of his people by Isaiah (xxix. 13) fit the present facts!

7. R.V., "But in vain . . . teaching *as their* doctrines the precepts of men." A slight adaptation

of the LXX, "teaching precepts and doctrines of men." Perhaps Jesus rather quoted the Hebrew, which, lacking the clause, "But in vain do they worship me," runs, "And their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them."

8. R.V., "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men," omitting the rest of the verse. It is not a question of under what forms the *Law* shall be kept, but a choice between two *opposites*.

9. The statement of ver. 8 is repeated in view of the illustration to follow, and with touch of irony. "A fine thing to reject," etc.

10. **curseth.** R.V., "speaketh evil of." At Ex. xxi. 17 R.V. "curseth," marg. "revileth." The lighter sense of the word is more probable; even evil speaking of parents forbidden on pain of death. How does "tradition" safeguard this sacred duty of filial piety?

11. **Corban.** R.V., "Given *to God*." The moral duty of providing for parents is recognised, yet callously set aside under pretext of religious obligation. Once let the word *Corban* be pronounced over the money which would keep them from want—it has become dedicated to Temple-service, and may not be diverted.

ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or mother, or, as Matthew has it, with irony, "he shall not honour his father." Perhaps the gift to the Temple was not actually offered, being evaded by some such casuistry of oaths as is described in Matt. xxiii. 16–22. But what Jesus condemns is the religious sanction given to the betrayal, on whatever pretext, of a moral

trust: to allow "sacrifice" to usurp the place of filial love was to "make void the word of God" (cf. also Matt. v. 23, 24).

14. The logic of our Lord's protest for truth and reality carried Him on to a yet bolder utterance. He had just denounced the immoral and godless externalism of tradition, as on other occasions He appealed from the letter of a command to its spirit; now, before all the people, bidding them give full heed to the significance of his words, He abrogates part of the Law itself by declaring the Levitical distinctions of clean and unclean, touching Jewish life at every point, to be without moral or religious meaning. No wonder that (according to Matthew) His disciples warn Him of the effect produced by His words, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?"

16. R.V. omits.

17. The difficulty of the "parable" perhaps lay in its revolutionary tendency if literally meant.

18. Moral defilement attaches to the moral nature, and cannot be communicated by food that merely passes through the body.

19. **purging all meats.** *I.e.*, the physical process just described *makes* all meats *clean*. This is the translation of a text in which the participle is *neuter*; in the true text it is *masculine*, and refers not to the process but to the speaker. The clause is an editorial note calling the reader's attention to the practical effect of the momentous saying just reported: "*This he said*, making all meats clean" (R.V.). Jesus still continued His ministry within the limits of Judaism, but He had set His gospel free from Jewish exclusiveness and prepared the way for the Apostle to the Gentiles.

21. The R.V. shows some difference in order. Cf. Rom. i. 29 ; Gal. v. 19.

22. **an evil eye.** A Hebrew synonym for a grudging, envious, greedy disposition: cf. Deut. xv. 9 ; Prov. xxviii. 22 ; Matt. vi. 23, xx. 15.

blasphemy. R.V., "railing."

Mark vii. 24–30 ; cf. Matt. xv. 21–28.

THE SYROPHŒNICIAN WOMAN.

24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of
Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have
25 no man know it: but he could not be hid. For a certain
woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard
26 of him, and came and fell at his feet: the woman was
a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation ; and she besought
him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.
27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled :
for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast
28 it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes,
Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's
29 crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy
30 way ; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when
she was come to her house, she found the devil gone
out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

We are not told of the sequel to our Lord's denunication of Leviticalism, which must have offended the religious sentiments of many besides the scribes and Pharisees. But it is at least significant that He at once went away (Matthew says "withdrew") to Gentile territory, and that from this point to the departure for Jerusalem (x. 1) there are few indications of any *public* work in Galilee. The stress of the narrative rather

changes to His teaching of the disciples, and the wide journeyings by which He secured privacy with them.

This beautiful story of a Gentile woman's faith is given by Matthew (xv. 21–28) in a form apparently more original. Its absence from Luke, the Gospel of universalism and of woman, is strange; but for some reason that Gospel omits all between Mark vi. 44 and viii. 27, perhaps to make room for the new matter which it introduces from Luke ix. 51 onwards.

26. The woman is a **Greek** in *language* and *religion* (unless the term be used in the wider sense of non-Jew, *i.e.* Gentile), **Phœnician** in *descent*, *resident* in **Syria.** Matthew calls her simply "a Canaanitish woman." The three terms emphasise the strangeness of her appeal to a Jew.

27. The abruptness of this answer is softened in Matthew. Before He replies, Jesus at first is silent, perhaps perplexed and troubled: His disciples, begging Him to free them from the woman's importunity by granting her request, are reminded that His mission was limited to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and it is only in response to her further pleading that He tells her, in proverbial phrase, of the reason for His hesitation. Jesus uses the Jewish term for Gentiles, **dogs,** but modifies it to the "little dogs" which at least have some place in the household. And the proverb is cited in half-jesting protest rather than to convey a harsh refusal.

28. R.V., "Yea, Lord; even the dogs," etc. The "yet" of A.V. suggests that she assents to an adverse verdict, yet finds a loophole of escape: but she in fact welcomes the metaphor as conceding

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her plea, and confidently looks for the "crumb" which, on Jesus' own showing, is her rightful due.

29. The language might suggest that the cure was a reward for her ready wit. It must be interpreted by the wondering exclamation recorded in Matthew: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt." Her impetuous faith, ignoring all barriers, had gone right to the heart of things, and set free His will and power to heal. What a breath of fresh reality after the stifling formalism from which He had lately escaped!

Mark vii. 31–37 (cf. Matt. xv. 29–31).

EPHPHATHA.

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,
he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the
32 coasts of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that
was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and
33 they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he
took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers
34 into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and
looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him,
35 Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his
ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed,
36 and he spake plain. And he charged them that they
should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so
37 much the more a great deal they published it; and were
beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all
things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the
dumb to speak.

A long détour (not specified by Matthew) brings Jesus again to the east side of the lake. Matthew

tells how the multitudes flocked to Him, bringing their sick. Mark gives the details of *one* cure, the first of the two miracles peculiar to his Gospel (cf. viii. 22–26).

33. The going aside from the multitude, the symbolic touch of the organ affected, the upward look of prayer and the sigh, and finally the tense word of command, preserved in its original Aramaic form, make up a picture drawn from life, and suggest special circumstances about this case to which we have not the clue. Saliva was popularly believed to have curative properties: cf. viii. *23*; John ix. 6.

36. The old story! See n. on i. *34*.

37. Matthew has an interesting reminder of the *Gentile* character of this multitude in his phrase, "They glorified the God of Israel."

Mark viii. 1–10; cf. Matt. 32–39.

THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND.

In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and
2 saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have
3 nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them
4 came from far. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in
5 the wilderness? And he asked them, How many loaves
6 have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before
7 the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he

blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.
8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the
9 broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that
had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them
10 away. And straightway he entered into a ship with his
disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

The points of resemblance between this miracle and that of chap. vi. are many and obvious: a few differences are noted below. The double story emphasises the certainty that Jesus *did* feed the multitudes.

1. R.V., "when there was again a great multitude." A reference to the similar situation of chap. vi. It is Jesus who this time raises the question of supplies.

2. A different motive for compassion from that of vi. 34, and the situation altogether more remarkable. Possibly this was a *Gentile* crowd which had so long interrupted the privacy of Jesus and His disciples.

3. R.V., "and some of them are come from far."

4. An extraordinary question after that of vi. 37 and its answer; but see vi. 52, viii. 17.

5. The supply of food, though not replenished for three days, is larger than on the former occasion; a lesson learnt, perhaps, during recent wanderings.

8. **baskets.** A different word from that of vi. 43, and a point of distinction consistently maintained in all the references to the two miracles: in what the difference consisted is not certain.

10. **Dalmanutha.** Matthew has "Magadan." Neither place can be identified, but it would seem that the crossing is from east to west, and at ver. 13 again from west to east.

Mark viii. 11–13; cf. Matt. xvi. 1–4, xii. 38–42; Luke xi. 29–32.

THE PHARISEES DEMAND A SIGN FROM HEAVEN.

11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.
12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you,
13 There shall no sign be given unto this generation. And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

11. The point lies in the **from heaven,** some dazzling portent in the skies such as was expected to usher in the Messianic kingdom (cf. xiii. 24).

tempting him. Because the demand came from a malicious unbelief (x. 2, xii. 15), and invited Him to forsake His trust in *spiritual* forces (i. 13). The word in itself might mean "testing," but the Markan usage, as quoted, seems decisive for the uglier meaning.

12. A grieved refusal: sign for the sake of sign He would and could give none. And why was it sought? Jonah preached, the men of Nineveh repented. A greater than Jonah is here, His preaching and His mighty works one continual sign: no other shall be given than the sign of Jonah (cf. Matt. xvi. 4 as interpreted by Matt. xii. 41, *not* by Matt. xii. 40, which looks like the product of after-reflection).

Mark viii. 14–21; cf. Matt. xvi. 5–12; Luke xi. 53–xii. 1.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND OF HEROD.

14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had
15 they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he
charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of
16 the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they
reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have
17 no bread. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them,
Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye
not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet
18 hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears,
19 hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the
five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of
fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.
20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many
baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said,
21 Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do
not understand?

The occasion of this isolated saying was made memorable to the disciples by a stupid comment, frankly related, leading to a severe rebuke.

15. The discovery that the bread had been forgotten suggests to Jesus a train of thought which at last finds expression in this abrupt warning.

leaven. The principle of fermentation, a type (except in the Parable of the Leaven) of pervasive *evil* influence (cf. 1 Cor. v. 6–8).

the leaven of the Pharisees may be interpreted as *formalism* in religion, issuing in spiritual blindness (ver. 11) and hypocrisy (Luke xii. 1);

that of **Herod** as *worldliness*. The teaching of Jesus laid all stress on simplicity and sincerity, inward truth and moral realities, the pure heart to which alone is granted the vision of God.

16. Their thoughts cannot rise beyond the material need, and in some vague fashion they suppose the Master's warning to be prompted by His concern at the thoughtless lack of bread.

17. A sharp rebuke to their persistent dulness (cf. iv. 13, vi. 52, vii. 18), asking whether even to the Twelve must Isaiah's words of judgment be applied (cf. iv. 12).

19–21. How is it possible that after such experiences they could imagine His thoughts to be busy with anxieties about food?

Mark viii. 22–26.

HEALING OF A BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA.

22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man
23 unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon
24 him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up,
25 and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and
26 he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

The second of the two miracles peculiar to Mark (cf. vii. 32–37), related, like the former, with unusually full and graphic detail.

22. **Bethsaida-Julias.** See n. on vi. 45.

23. The details closely resemble those of vii. 33.

24. The only instance in the Gospels of a *gradual* cure: at the first contact a dim perception of objects which might be trees were it not that they move, at the second fully restored vision. The man remembered what trees and men looked like, so could not have been always blind.

The A.V. follows a faulty text, and does not give the two stages of recovery of sight accurately. R.V., "And he looked up, and said, I see men; for I behold them as trees, walking. Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked stedfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly."

26. After "saying" R.V. has simply, "Do not even enter into the village."

Mark viii. 27–ix. 1; cf. Matt. xvi. 13–28 = Luke ix. 18–27.

THE DISCIPLES RECOGNISE JESUS AS MESSIAH.

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of
Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples,
28 saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And
they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias;
29 and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them,
But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and
30 saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged
31 them that they should tell no man of him. And he began
to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many
things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief
priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise
32 again. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter

took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had
turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked
Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou
savourest not the things that be of God, but the things
that be of men. And when he had called the people unto
him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever
will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his
cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life
shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake
and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it
profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his
own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his
soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and
of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of
him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he
cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.
ix. 1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there
be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of
death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with
power.

Mark's story now reaches a momentous crisis in the life of Jesus. The great incidents of chap. vi. were really the climax of His ministry in Galilee; since the open rupture with "tradition" which followed, He had been more or less an exile, alone with His disciples.

How His thoughts of Himself and His mission developed under the altered conditions we cannot tell, but the retirement to the remote North and the question put to His disciples witness to a changed outlook and a settled purpose. For Him the parting of the ways had come, and He must enter upon a way which He knew to be the way of the Cross. His conviction that He was Messiah, dawning upon Him perhaps at His baptism, had

been kept hidden in His own heart, deepening of late under experiences which must have turned His thoughts to the prophet's description of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, rejected by His generation.

Had that conviction dawned upon His disciples? What did *they* think of Him, after months of close companionship? For if He had succeeded there, and by the methods of His own choice, no other failure mattered. That is what He must know before He can put the past behind Him and "set His face to go to Jerusalem." And so *for the first time* He questions them of their thoughts about Himself, elicits from Peter the great confession, and immediately, *for the first time*, warns them of His impending rejection and death.

27. **Cæsarea Philippi.** Formerly Panias (now Banias), on the south slopes of Hermon, partly rebuilt by Philip the Tetrarch, and renamed Cæsarea in honour of the Emperor; commonly known as "Philip's Cæsarea" in distinction from Cæsarea on the seacoast (Acts ix. 30, etc.). Jesus kept to the "villages" (R.V.) of the district.

Who do men say that I am? (the ungrammatical "whom" is an imitation of the Greek idiom). Jesus had no doubt heard of the earlier rumours about Himself, but may well have wished to learn whether a more daring surmise had not found voice among the people.

28. See n. on vi. 14, 15. They recognised in Him a personality altogether outside ordinary experience, possibly the herald of Messiah, but of Messiah Himself they had quite other expectations.

29. The question must have been put with intense emotion, for on its answer depended, so far

as we can see, the success or failure of His mission. It was at least conceivable that the disciples at best shared the popular belief: familiar intimacy with the great does not always bring clearer insight into their greatness. But if through this very personal fellowship they had so come to know Him as to surrender all lesser ideals of the kingdom for His ideal and to see fulfilled in Him, against all preconception, every promise of a Deliverer for Israel, then His cause was safe: in winning them He had won all. Peter, as spokesman of the disciples, gives their answer: what it meant to Jesus may be gathered from the exultant outburst recorded by Matthew (xvi. 17–19).

Thou art the Christ (Luke adds, "of God"; Matthew, "the Son of the living God": the shorter form is probably original). "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of "Messiah," "the anointed One": the term is taken from the "anointing" by which kings and priests were designated to their office.

30. See notes on i. 11, 34, ii. 10.

31. **began to teach them.** A most startling new departure in His instruction, the first of three recorded announcements of His coming Passion (cf. ix. 31, x. 33).

Son of man. See n. on ii. 10. Here evidently a Messianic title.

must suffer. Jesus sees in all that awaits Him the Divine *ought*.

elders and chief priests and scribes. A designation of the national Council, or Sanhedrin, by its constituent parts.

32. **openly.** Without any reserve: not hinting at it as a dread possibility, but plainly declaring that it must and would happen. Peter, startled out of

self-control by this unexpected shock to the Messianic faith he had confessed so confidently, took Jesus aside and rebuked Him. Matthew quotes the words: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee."

33. R.V., "But he turning about, and seeing his disciples." For the disciples' sake Peter's intervention must be sharply censured and the motives of it openly and instantly disavowed.

Satan. Jesus does not "call names," but recognises Peter's suggestion that He might yet avoid the appointed way of the Cross as a temptation from the devil; cf. Matt. iv. 10.

savourest. R.V., "mindest" (cf. for the word used, Rom. viii. 5; Phil. ii. 5, iii. 19; Col. iii. 2). The whole set of the mind from which such a temptation could come is opposed to the Divine thought and will. A humiliating rebuke for the man who had just reached the height of confessing Jesus as the Christ; but the faith of the disciples had many a lesson to learn before it could survive the Crucifixion, and many more before it could find in the Cross its deepest inspiration and its message for the world.

34. This introduction of the **multitude** is unexpected; it is omitted by Matthew, and is modified by Luke into "And he said to them all."

If any man wills to follow Jesus, he must be prepared, not simply to give up some things that are pleasant, but to renounce himself, even to the point, if need be, of a shameful death.

take up his cross. Not a forecast by Jesus of the manner of His own death, but a general expression, which all would understand, for going to execution.

35. *The instinct of self-preservation is only rightly interpreted and fulfilled by self-renunciation.* The great saying of this verse is expressed in a paradoxical form which does not easily lend itself to exact interpretation. The phrase "to save a life" has already occurred (iii. 4) as the opposite to "kill," in a literal sense, and that is its ordinary meaning. Further, Jesus immediately goes on to speak of the *future* coming of the Son of man and of the kingdom of God: then He will "be ashamed" of those who have been ashamed of Him, and (according to Matt. xvi. 27) will "render to every man according to his deeds." A similar saying as to finding and losing life is repeated by Matthew in another context (x. 39), where it is again led up to by the possibility that Jesus may "deny" men before His Father (ver. 33), and also by a warning not to be afraid of them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul (lit. "life," the word used throughout our passage), but to fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Luke also has the saying a second time, in connection with the coming of the Son of man (xvii. 33). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus, knowing that now the "hour has come" when He must die, declares, "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John xii. 25). It would seem clear, then, that in its simpler and primary aspect the saying is *eschatological*, referring to the *future*. To cling to life unworthily, whatever be the immediate gain, is ultimate loss unspeakable, for death when it does come will mean exclusion from the kingdom of God, or, in John's equivalent phrase, the loss of

eternal life; on the other hand, the life that is willingly laid down in loyalty to Christ is not ended, but passes on into life eternal.

> "That, has the world here—should he need the next,
> Let the world mind him!
> This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
> Seeking shall find Him."
> BROWNING, *A Grammarian's Funeral*.

Since, however, Jesus conceived of the kingdom of God and of eternal life not only as future but as here and now, the words have also a *present* significance: they are an ethical valuation of life. A man may lose his life even while he continues to live, may save his life though he has surrendered all that in others' judgment makes life worth living. So regarded, this saying of Jesus must be taken in its full sweep. He does not simply bid us part with the lower things of life to gain the higher. The same word—**life**—is used throughout the passage, and it has one meaning, not two. It stands for the individual **self**: to lose one's life is to deny oneself (ver. 34), and the call is to abandon self-interests, higher or lower, round which as a centre life tends to revolve, and to seek a centre outside self. In living for others, supremely in living for Another, is life for self realised. A paradox, startling if pressed (as R.V. marg., quite legitimately) to the point of saying, "Whosoever would save his *soul* shall lose it," yet the very secret of life for Jesus Himself and for all who would follow Him.

for my sake. A great claim, confirming Peter's confession. The addition **and the gospel's** is not found in Matthew or Luke.

36. **lose his own soul.** R.V., "forfeit his life." The *one* word should have *one* rendering, whether "life" or "soul," all through the passage.

38. An appropriation of the prophecy of Dan. vii. 13; cf. xiii. 26, xiv. 62.

ix. 1. A clear and solemn (**Verily I say unto you**) prediction of **the coming of the kingdom of God** (Matthew, "the Son of man coming in his kingdom") within the lifetime of some at least of the Twelve. The introductory formula, **And he said unto them,** may indicate an isolated saying, placed in this context by the Evangelist. But it evidently links on to what has preceded, and should form the closing verse of chap. viii. (so R.V.). To place it at the beginning of chap. ix. is to *interpret* the prediction as fulfilled in the Transfiguration, an interpretation of venerable antiquity, but quite unwarrantable. That event was not a coming of the kingdom of God with power; and it was too probable to need explicit statement that some at least of the disciples would be still alive at the end of a week. What these difficult words really mean may be better considered in connection with the prophecies of chap. xiii.

Mark ix. 2-8; cf. Matt. xvii. 1-8=Luke ix. 28-36.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James,
and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart
3 by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And
his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so
4 as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared
unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with

5 Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it
is good for us to be here: and let us make three taber-
nacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.
6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.
7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a
voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved
8 Son: hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked
round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only
with themselves.

The wonderful occurrence now to be related follows close on the announcement of the Passion, with the comments to which it led: the connection is emphasised by the unusual note of time, "after six days." At the crisis of His choice of the path of humiliation and death there comes to Jesus this hour of exaltation and the approving voice from heaven. The disciples had now to hold fast their new-found faith in the Christ in spite of the "offence of the cross": they are permitted one convincing vision of His glory and are bidden hear Him as One in whom Law and Prophets find fulfilment. Thus the Transfiguration "corrects the perspective of the sufferings, and preludes the triumph" (Loisy). Yet while we can see the fitness of the event at this juncture, both for Jesus and the disciples, the event itself lies beyond our understanding: the commentator must give place to the preacher and the poet.

2. **Peter and James and John.** Cf. v. 37, xiv. 33. **a high mountain.** As it is only at ver. 30 that they leave the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, the scene is evidently some summit of the Hermon range, not the traditional Tabor near Nazareth. Luke says His purpose was to pray.

transfigured. An emphatic word to express the complete and wonderful change; cf. 2 Cor. iii. 18 (same word). Luke, "as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered."

3. Matthew, "His face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light."

shining. R.V., "glistering," *i.e.*, glistening, gleaming. Luke has "dazzling" (lit. "flashing forth like lightning"). The Evangelists use every resource of language in the attempt to describe their vision of "his glory" (Luke). The vision is enhanced if (with Luke) we suppose it to have been set in the darkness of night.

as snow. It is tempting to connect the figure with the snows of Hermon, but R.V. rightly omits: perhaps from Dan. vii. 9.

4. The two outstanding figures of the O.T.: **Elijah** (named first) the prophet, and in the N.T. the herald of Messiah (Mal. iv. 5; cf. Mark vi. 15, and see below, ver. 11), and with him **Moses** the lawgiver, the founder and embodiment of Judaism. "Law and prophecy rendered homage to the Gospel" (Loisy). Luke adds that they "spake of his decease."

5. According to A.V. (and R.V.), Peter, in a dazed sort of way, intrudes upon the vision with an expression of satisfaction (possibly of *thanks* to Jesus, so Weymouth, *N.T. in Modern Speech*) at being permitted to witness it. The words, however, may mean, "What a good thing that we are here!" viz. to help thee to retain these heavenly visitants by building shelters. This seems nearer to the Greek, and gives fresh point to the comment of ver. 6.

tabernacles. Booths for shelter, made of branches of trees. Peter, not yet convinced that

"the Son of man must suffer many things," might well feel that Jesus had now assumed His rightful glory as Messiah, and must never let it depart from Him.

6. How foolish the suggestion looked in the light of a later understanding of the true glory of Christ and the way by which it was reached!

R.V., "they became sore afraid." The unheeded words died away in dread before the growing wonder of the vision: so Matthew and Luke.

7. R.V., "And there came a cloud overshadowing them" (Matthew, "a bright cloud"). The symbol of the awful Presence of God (Ex. xvi. 10, xxiv. 15–18, xxxiii. 9, etc.).

a voice. Cf. n. on i. 11. The *disciples* receive the Divine testimony to Jesus as the Christ "of whom Moses and the prophets did write" (John i. 45), and the Divine command to hear and obey Him. Every other authority for truth or conduct, however august, is to be estimated and interpreted by His word: every other revelation is crowned and perfected in Him.

8. Matthew depicts them fallen to the ground in terror, till reassured by the touch and voice of Jesus. The vision passed in a moment, but all that it had meant might still be realised in the companionship and service of their Master. Cf. Heb. xii. 18–24.

Mark ix. 9–13; cf. Matt. xvii. 9–13.

ON THE WAY DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had

10 seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with
11 another what the rising from the dead should mean. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must
12 first come? And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and
13 be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Jesus repeats the injunction to silence of viii. 30. The prohibition, coupled with a reference to His resurrection which they did not understand, explains why the vision they had witnessed makes no mark upon the evangelic history beyond the bare record. The notes of the conversation which follows are fragmentary: the disciples evidently try to get fresh light on the perplexities which have been crowding upon them.

10. R.V., "And they kept [lit. *held fast*] the saying, questioning among themselves." Cf. ver. 32.

11. See n. on vi. 15. If there is any reference to the appearance of Elijah just recorded, their difficulty is that this belated and momentary coming in vision does not fulfil the prophecy or the expectations based upon it. But the sequel suggests that the disciples ignore the vision and are perplexed because Elijah has not come at all.

12. The prophecy holds good: **Elijah does come first,** with the functions predicted of him (Mal. iv. 6). How so? Before answering, Jesus corrects their perspective by putting a *question* to them. This particular prophecy was prominent in popular beliefs about Messiah, and they are con-

cerned to see its fulfilment. Have they the same concern about other prophecies of Him? **How** (*i.e.* with what meaning) **is it written of the Son of man, that he must suffer?** Does *that* prophecy hold good, and are they prepared to see it come to pass? The reference is to Isa. liii. Matthew is simpler here.

13. **Elijah had come** in the person of John the Baptist (so, according to Matthew, the disciples rightly understood), who suffered for righteousness' sake, and so fulfilled the threatenings **written** concerning Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 17, xix. 2, 10). See notes on i. 2–8.

Mark ix. 14–29; cf. Matt. xvii. 14–20 = Luke ix. 37–43.

THE EPILEPTIC BOY.

14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great
multitude about them, and the scribes questioning
15 with them. And straightway all the people, when they
beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him
16 saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What
17 question ye with them? And one of the multitude
answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my
18 son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he
taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth
with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples
19 that they should cast him out; and they could not. He
answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how
long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?
20 bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him:
and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him;
21 and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And
he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came

22 unto him? And he said, Of a child. And ofttimes it hath
cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him:
but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and
23 help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all
24 things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears,
25 Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus
saw that the people came running together, he rebuked
the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf
spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more
26 into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and
came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch
27 that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the
28 hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he
was come into the house, his disciples asked him
29 privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he
said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but
by prayer and fasting.

The contrast between the glories of the mountain top and the scene of human suffering and distress to which Jesus and the three return is very striking. "Rafael's great picture of the Transfiguration translates into form and colour the art which is already present in this narrative" (Menzies). Cf. the return of Moses from Sinai (Ex. xxxii.). Each of the Synoptics gives the story in this connection: Mark's version is much the fullest and most graphic.

14. Even in these remote parts the news that Jesus was in the neighbourhood had spread and had attracted the usual **multitude.** Just now the centre of interest was the distressed father, who had brought his son to Jesus (ver. 17), and, finding Him absent, in the urgency of the case had appealed to the nine **disciples.** The failure of

their attempted cure gave the watching **scribes** their opportunity.

15. The amazement and eager welcome are sufficiently explained by the unlooked-for appearance of **Jesus** at this critical moment. There is no parallel to the shining of Moses' face (Ex. xxxiv. 30): the secret of the Transfiguration was to be hidden from all men (ver. 9).

16. **the scribes.** R.V., "them." The question is addressed to the crowd of ver. 15, "What is all this about, between you and my disciples?"

17. **hath a dumb spirit.** Matthew (R.V.), "is epileptic" (lit. moonstruck, "lunatic" (A.V.), this malady being anciently attributed to the baleful influence of the moon).

18. A graphic description (other details in Matthew and Luke) of epilepsy, attributed in popular belief to possession by a demon; accompanied in this case by loss of speech and hearing (ver. 25). See notes on i. 23, v. 15.

teareth. R.V., "dasheth him down," the instant fall of an epileptic seizure.

19. R.V., "And he answereth them." *All* who surround Him are included in this outcry against the unbelief of His age, but rather as factors in a general situation than as severally culpable. The *scribes* seem to be ignored, the *disciples* would not be publicly rebuked, and their failure is not in the sequel (ver. 29) put down to lack of faith (otherwise in Matthew), there is no hint that the *crowd* were influenced by an unbelieving curiosity, and the *father* at least had shown a faith which Jesus takes pains to strengthen. It would rather seem that the return to this typical scene of suffering and dispute, with its claim upon Him, was for the

moment more than He could bear. His thoughts just now were full of other matters than healing sick people and answering the cavils of the scribes. The shallowness, the noise, the fruitlessness of it all jarred upon feelings strained by high resolve and the lonely vision. Oh to be done with it, and accomplish the work for which He was sent! A similar cry from an overburdened heart is recorded by Luke (xii. 49, 50). What Divine compassion, therefore, is revealed in the words in which, with instant suppression of self, He answers the father's appeal, **bring him unto me.**"

20. **tare.** Rather, "violently convulsed."

21. The sympathetic questions would raise the man's hopes and help him to believe.

23. The A.V. misses the point of this rejoinder. Jesus catches up the father's word, "If thou canst do anything," and exclaims, **If thou canst!** The question is not whether *Jesus* can but whether *he* can: **All things are possible to him that believeth.** A saying notable for the unreserve with which it affirms the boundless possibilities of faith; interpretation needs to beware lest, from lack of faith, it substitutes its own measure for that of the Master: cf. xi. 23, 24.

24. R.V. omits **with tears** and **Lord.**

help thou mine unbelief. Commonly interpreted (as in Dr. Weymouth's version), "Strengthen my weak faith"; but perhaps the "help" rather repeats the "help" of ver. 22, and looks, not directly to the strengthening of faith, but to the rescue of the boy notwithstanding any defects of faith. Though the father feels his are

but "lame hands of faith," he stretches them out to Jesus, and not in vain.

25. Apparently (though it has not been stated) Jesus had retired to some little distance from the crowd (cf. vii. 33, viii. 23), which now loses patience and comes running up in hope of seeing a miracle. At the sight Jesus cuts short His talk with the father, and with quick, stern command bids the unclean spirit **come out of the boy and enter no more into him.** The latter command is prompted by the recurrent nature of the seizures. Cf. i. 25, 26.

27. A gracious touch: cf. i. 31, v. 41. Luke notes that He "gave him back to his father."

28. The question suggests that in similar cases the disciples had successfully used the authority committed to them (vi. 7). Why this humiliating failure?

29. **This kind.** Either "this kind of thing," viz. unclean spirits in general; or "this kind of demon," unclean spirits of exceptional power and malignity. If the former, the disciples had been betrayed by their successes into a self-confidence which forgot that "miracles of any kind are possible only to him who prays"; if the latter, they had made the mistake of neglecting the *special* preparation needful for a special case. Cf. Peter's disclaimer (Acts iii. 12).

by prayer. Cf. the example of Jesus, i. 35 n. The reference is not merely to the *act* but to the *discipline* of prayer, the habitual reliance upon God which opens up and keeps clear the channels for His power (cf. n. on xiv. 38).

The R.V. omits **and fasting.** The addition emphasises, what is already involved in "by

prayer," the need of moral discipline (not of religious ritual, cf. ii. 18–20) in order to effective action.

This verse appears also in A.V. of Matt. xvii. 21: R.V. rightly omits. Matthew attributes the cause of failure to the "little faith" of the disciples, adding the saying found in Mark at xi. 23.

Mark ix. 30–32; cf. Matt. xvii. 22, 23 = Luke ix. 43–45.

SECOND PREDICTION OF THE PASSION.

30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee;
31 and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him;
32 and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Cf. viii. 31, x. 33. The Transfiguration, like the great confession of viii. 29, makes it necessary to familiarise the disciples with the idea of His death. A new feature is the reference to His being "delivered up," a word specially (iii. 19) though not exclusively (i. 14, xiii. 9, etc.) associated with the *betrayal* by Judas. The third prediction (x. 33, 34) is still more precise in its details.

30. From Cæsarea Philippi along the west bank of the Jordan to Capernaum (ver. 33), a secret journey through the scenes of His earlier ministry, unmarked by any public incident because henceforth His chief concern was for the instruction of His disciples.

31. Lit. "is being delivered up." The beginning of the end is already present.

32. Why were the disciples wholly unprepared for the death and resurrection of their Lord when these events happened? Mark's explanation is that the first prediction was received with indignant remonstrance, the second with lack of understanding and reluctance to seek enlightenment. On the third occasion he says nothing about the effect on the disciples: Luke repeats the failure to understand, and suggests there as he does here, that "it was hid from them," as if by Divine purpose.

Mark ix. 33–37; cf. Matt. xviii. 1–5 = Luke ix. 46–48.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he
asked them, What was it that ye disputed among your-
34 selves by the way? But they held their peace: for by
the way they had disputed among themselves, who should
35 be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve,
and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the
36 same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took
a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he
37 had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whoso-
ever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth
me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me,
but him that sent me.

A last brief sojourn in Capernaum, probably in the home of Peter (see Matt. xvii. 24–27), before the departure from Jerusalem. It was rendered memorable to the disciples by a rebuke and by an object-lesson on the meaning of true greatness. Each Synoptist gives his own version, and the

differences make it difficult to trace the exact lines of the discourse; but the main teaching stands out clear in its significance for the disciples and for all who would know and imitate the mind of the Master.

33, 34. This setting to the discourse is given by Mark alone. It is a lifelike picture — the little company on their way home, Jesus in front, not seeming to heed the voices raised behind Him in heated dispute; then in the house the quiet searching question and the ashamed silence.

greatest. Matthew adds, "in the kingdom of heaven," and from the later petition of James and John (x. 37) we may suppose that the disciples' thoughts, spite of repeated warnings, were still busy with the glories of the Messiah's reign and of their own share in them.

35. The lesson comes first, the illustration follows: in Matthew and Luke this order is reversed.

servant. R.V., "minister." The word is specially used of serving at table (Luke xxii. 27, etc.), and so perhaps here.

This saying occurs in other contexts (x. 43, 44; Matt. xx. 26, 27, xxiii. 11; Luke xxii. 26), which make it clear that its intention is not to make service the *penalty* of wishing to be great, but to point out the one *way* by which that wish may be attained. Luke catches its spirit here in his version, "for he that is least among you all, the same is great."

36. R.V., "a little child." Only Mark preserves the beautiful human touch, **taking him in his arms,** both here and at x. 16.

37. It is important here to let Mark speak

for himself. Matthew records *three* lessons drawn from this little child, Mark (and Luke) *one* only. Whatever Jesus may have said on other occasions about the beautiful qualities of childhood, as type of the kingdom of heaven and pattern for His disciples, these are hardly in question just now. He took the little child in His arms because it *was* a little child, weak and dependent, and therefore claiming and attracting protection and love from the strong. Its insignificance and helplessness is precisely its worth for service: to receive one such little child, to stoop to this lowly ministry and yet not to be conscious of stooping but rather of rising to the height of for his name's sake, is to receive Christ himself. That is the Master's way of greatness, and it is simply set in contrast with the disciples' strife for pre-eminence: to *serve* the child is to serve God. Matthew gives two other sayings concerning *likeness to* the child: we shall find the counterpart to these at x. 14, 15. In the development of the discourse both here and in Matthew the little child becomes the type of the weak disciple and his claim for consideration and help.

in my name. "Not from vague beneficence, but because the action is one which the disciple feels his connection with Christ to require of him" (Menzies).

him that sent me. A thought which appears in Mark only here and xii. 6: very frequent in the Fourth Gospel.

Mark ix. 38–50; cf. Luke ix. 49, 50; Matt. xviii. 6–35.

EXCLUSIVENESS AND SELF-DISCIPLINE.

38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one
casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us:
39 and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But
Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which
shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak
40 evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part.
41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in
my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto
42 you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall
offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is
better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck,
43 and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend
thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life
maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the
44 fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm
45 dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot
offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt
into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the
46 fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm
47 dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye
offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into
the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes
48 to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and
49 the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted
with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.
50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, where-
with will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have
peace one with another.

The incident of vers. 38–40 is omitted by Matthew, and in Luke ends this section of the teaching. As placed by Mark it seems to break the connection: ver. 42 links on naturally to ver. 37

(so in Matt. xviii. 5, 6). John's intervention is not irrelevant to what has gone before, for the veto laid by the disciples on an outsider may have been due to the spirit of self-assertion just rebuked; but the connection is not very obvious, and may in part be suggested by the recurring phrase, "in my name."

38. The incident had occurred on some occasion when Jesus was not with the disciples. Knowing how their own power against the demons was dependent upon Jesus (vi. 14 n.), they may well have thought that one who successfully used His name in his exorcisms should have acknowledged Him and joined their company. So he should, for his own sake and for Christ's sake: the disciples had a just claim upon him, as the Church has a just claim on those who sympathise yet hold themselves aloof. The mistake they made was to oppose his work, with such confidence that they were doing what was incumbent upon professed disciples of Jesus, that they had not thought it necessary at the time to tell Him what they had done. Now they are beginning to doubt, and Jesus teaches them a more excellent way.

39. **miracle.** R.V., "mighty work" (vi. 2, 5, 14). Any question of *right* is settled in the very fact that the works of power are performed. And there is this much gain, that the man who has so experienced the power of Christ's name "will not be able quickly" (R.V.) to join the ranks of His traducers.

40. The disciples should discern and welcome what unites under all that separates: loyalty to their Master does not mean exclusiveness, but a comprehensiveness which is bold to claim for Him

whatever work bears the stamp of His spirit and His power, though the worker disclaim their fellowship.

(In another connection Matthew (xii. 30) and Luke (xi. 23) give a saying which, *if applied to the same circumstances,* would contradict this declaration that neutrality is not necessarily hostility: "He that is not with me is against me." But these words are applied to circumstances of avowed and bitter hostility to Jesus, when to be indifferent is to side with His foes. Interpretation must always take heed to context.)

41. **in my name.** R.V. omits, reading simply "because ye are Christ's." The recognition of those not committed to discipleship is further widened to the smallest service rendered out of general goodwill to His cause. Matthew places this saying in another context (x. 42).

42. The dropped thread of ver. 37 is resumed, but the "little child" is now *the weak and lowly disciple.* This bounden duty of considerateness towards the weak in faith and tender in conscience is finely illustrated by the Apostle who "brought himself into bondage to all, that he might gain the more": see Rom. xiv.; 1 Cor. viii., ix.; 2 Cor. xi. 29.

offend. R.V., "cause to stumble." See n. on vi. 3.

43. The same keynote, "cause to stumble," but change of theme. The peril now is to oneself. Life has interests and attractions, innocent in themselves yet hazardous to discipleship. Better give them up, with pain of self-sacrifice and sense of a crippled life, than incur the risk of their mastery. Asceticism may be necessary, not for virtue's sake but in self-defence. The language,

of course, is symbolic throughout, and contains no positive teaching of Jesus as to the future state.

hell. Lit. "Gehenna," *i.e.* Valley of Hinnom, probably west and south of Jerusalem, the scene of the fiery worship of Moloch (2 Chron. xxviii. 3, xxxiii. 6), and consequently defiled by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 10); it was held in such abhorrence that in later Jewish thought it became the type of a place of future and eternal punishment. The assertion that it was utilised for the refuse of the city, with fires kept burning to consume the rubbish and prevent infection, lacks evidence. For the *metaphor* of the **unquenchable fire** and the **undying worm** (ver. 48), cf. Isa. lxvi. 24. Jesus clothes His warning of a real disaster in the language of His day; for His other references to Gehenna see Matt. v. 22, 29, 30, x. 28, xxiii. 15, 33.

R.V. omits vers. 44, 46: see ver. 48.

49. A saying found in Mark only, and "confessedly one of the most difficult passages to interpret in the N.T." (Gould). The second clause refers to the command of Lev. ii. 13, where the salt to be added to every oblation represents, according to the Eastern symbolism of "eating of a man's salt," the "salt of the covenant" (cf. Num. xviii. 19; 2 Chron. xiii. 5), pledge of amity between God and His people. Some interpreters suppose a transference of this idea to the "fire" of the Holy Spirit (Matt. iii. 11), by which the disciple of Christ is "salted" into the new covenant, purified and preserved (so Swete); in case of apostasy the covenant is still fulfilled upon him by the penal fires of Gehenna (so Meyer).

But this explanation is obscure in itself, and is rendered nugatory by the fact that the clause in question is almost certainly an interpolation. In R.V. the verse is reduced to **For every one shall be salted with fire,** and the problem is to interpret this saying *in its own context*, which, as the final injunction "be at peace among yourselves" returns to the starting-point of the quarrel (ver. 34), is evidently intended to be continuous. The word **fire,** then, is suggested by what precedes; it is the fire of pain; the word **salted** is explained by what follows: **salt is good,** its application purifies and preserves. And Jesus seems to bring these two conflicting notions together. In the moral making of a man he must suffer pain, self-inflicted or inflicted upon him, sharp and fierce as the pain of fire; but the fire acts as the salt of God.

50. Elsewhere (Matt. v. 13; Luke xiv. 34) the emphasis of this saying lies on the disciples' fitness for *service*; they are "the salt of the earth": here it looks still more intimately to *character*. **Have salt in yourselves.** You have powers, if you will use them, of self-knowledge, self-control, self-discipline; purify *yourselves*, if need be through the fires of self-renunciation, lest the fires of God's discipline come upon you. **For if the salt have lost its saltness,** if through misuse or lack of use these powers have become impotencies, how can they be restored and the moral life saved from corruption?

have peace. R.V., "be at peace." A final reference to the dispute of ver. 34. To let self-seeking and jealousy have sway is fatal to character and influence.

Mark x. 1–12; cf. Matt. xix. 1–12.

DIVORCE.

And he rose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of
Judæa by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort
unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them
2 again. And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him,
Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.
3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses
4 command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write
5 a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus
answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your
6 heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning
7 of the creation God made them male and female. For
this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and
8 cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh:
9 so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What
therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same
11 matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put
away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery
12 against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband,
and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

This chapter contains six incidents of the journey to Jerusalem, of which the first is the question of the Pharisees about divorce. Matthew follows Mark, except that he adds the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard; but Luke makes a long story of this journey, inserting much new matter. Luke ix. 51 is parallel to Mark x. 1: the next point of contact is Luke xviii. 15, parallel to Mark x. 13.

1. R.V., "cometh into the borders of Judæa and beyond Jordan." Jesus breaks new ground in

Peræa, which He ultimately leaves for Jerusalem by way of Jericho (ver. 46). Again the scenes of the earlier ministry, intermittent since vi. 53–56, are resumed.

2. The question so put clearly hopes for a pronouncement against the Law, which indubitably permitted divorce. Matthew's addition, "for every cause," points to the division between the Jewish schools as to laxer and stricter interpretation of the Law.

3. An answer suggesting unexpected and unwelcome respect for the Law.

4. The appeal is to Deut. xxiv. 1, which does not legalise divorce, but, taking the custom for granted, regularises it in the interests of the wife.

5. Jesus answers Moses by Moses (Gen. i. 27, ii. 24), the regulating precept, accommodated to the existing facts of human society, by the original Divine institution of marriage, which contemplated a spiritual and therefore indissoluble union.

9. An inference from the Scripture facts which plainly abrogates the Law permitting divorce.

10. The perplexing teaching leads again to the situation of iv. 10, vii. 17.

11. An uncompromising restatement of the position already assumed; cf. Luke xvi. 18. Matthew has the saying twice (v. 32, and in this same context xix. 9), in both cases softened down by the proviso "except for fornication."

12. A case not contemplated by the Law at all.

Mark x. 13–16; cf. Matt. xix. 13–15=Luke xviii. 15–17.

JESUS WELCOMES LITTLE CHILDREN.

13 And they brought young children to him, that he should
touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought
14 them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased,
and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto
me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of
15 God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive
the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter
16 therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands
upon them, and blessed them.

Cf. n. on ix. 37. This incident shows us again the tenderness of Jesus towards children, with new teaching as to the child-spirit and the kingdom of God.

13. **little children,** as at ix. 36. Luke says "babes."

touch. See i. 41, iii. 10, v. 27, vi. 56, viii. 22, and cf. ver. 16. Matthew has "that he should lay his hands on them, and pray."

rebuked. In concern for their Master's dignity and comfort (cf. ver. 48).

14. **much displeased.** R.V., "moved with indignation." He is angry that they should not understand better the worth to Him of the mothers' appeal and of the children themselves. Mark only.

of such. *I.e.*, "the kingdom belongs to such." In little children Jesus sees the very marks of the kingdom—simplicity and reality, dependence, receptivity, trustfulness; in thrusting the children away the disciples are keeping them out of their own. No controversial issues should restrict the

application of the words "of such": it includes the children themselves; the further teaching as to the *childlike* is given in the next verse.

15. **Verily I say unto you.** The formula (thirteen times in Mark) emphasises the importance of the word to be spoken.

receive the kingdom. The phrase is unique and notable. "Only one who does not intentionally put away from him and slight this kingdom, and who does not think that he can and must first earn it by his own doings, but receives it like a child, can participate in its blessings" (Wendt). The teaching is immediately illustrated in the story of the rich young ruler (vers. 17–22).

as a little child. This "unpretentious receptivity" (Wendt) is especially characteristic of the child: a sympathetic study of children will unfold the elements of worth and charm in the child's nature better than any attempted analysis. "According to Jesus, a well-conditioned child illustrates better than anything else on earth the distinctive features of Christian character. Because he does not assert nor aggrandise himself. . . . Because he can imagine, and has the key of another world, entering in through the ivory gate and living amid the things unseen and eternal. The new society of Jesus was a magnificent imagination, and he who entered it must lay aside the world-standards and ideals of character, and become as a little child" (Dr. John Watson).

16. A Christlike interpretation of the request that He would "touch" them.

Mark x. 17–31; cf. Matt. xix. 16–30 = Luke xviii. 18–30.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER.

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came
one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good
Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?
18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good?
19 there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest
the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not
kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not,
20 Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and
said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my
21 youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and
said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell
whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou
shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the
22 cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying,
and went away grieved; for he had great possessions.
23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples,
How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the
24 kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at
his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto
them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in
25 riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for
a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich
26 man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were
astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who
27 then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With
men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all
28 things are possible. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo,
29 we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered
and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath
left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother,
or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the
30 gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this

time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world
31 to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

17. The **running** and **kneeled** form one of Mark's vivid pictures. Matthew says that he was a "young man," Luke that he was a "ruler," *i.e.* a man of position and influence.

Good Master (lit. "Teacher"). To say (with Dalman) that the epithet means, not morally good, but kind, that by usage it was only applied to God, and that therefore it was "mere insolent flattery," is an interpretation which lacks sufficient evidence and which seems to miss the intention of our Lord's rejoinder. The address is sincere and natural: it recognises in Jesus the quality of *attractive moral goodness* as distinguished from mere *rectitude* (cf. Rom. v. 7), and in some dim way realises that *there* is the secret of the life which is craved for. It is this secret which the sequel unfolds.

eternal life. A Jewish expression for the *summum bonum*; share in the blessings of Messiah's kingdom, equivalent to the "life" of ix. 43, 45.

18. Jesus challenges the title, not to disclaim it but to carry it up to its Source. There is only one Fountain of all goodness, and therefore of all life, the living God, Giver of life to men through channels of trust and fellowship. The question is not a repulse but an invitation. If this man can be led to see *why* he instinctively and rightly calls Jesus "good," and to translate knowledge into action, he has found God, whom to know *is* life eternal. (In the R.V. of Matthew the man asks, "What good thing shall I do?" and is answered,

"Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good." This version only emphasises the interpretation just suggested. Goodness belongs not to deeds but to a Person; it is not to be won, but is imparted through fellowship with Him who is the Source and Giver of all good.)

19. From the hard saying of ver. 18 the man is recalled to familiar ground. Eternal life? Well, is it not written, "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them"? (Lev. xviii. 5; cf. Gal. iii. 12). Has *that* way been tried? The **commandments** cited are those of the second table of the Decalogue with the omission of the tenth, which perhaps is represented by the precept, specially pertinent to a rich man, "Do not defraud"; cf. Jas. v. 4.

20. Yes, that way has been tried, and leaves the quest still unsatisfied. "What lack I yet?" (Matthew).

21. He must lose life to save it, renounce self that he may find God, cease from thinking what he must do, and receive the kingdom as a little child.

Only Mark says that **Jesus** looked upon him and loved him. Because He loved him He called him to the highest.

22. He could not rise to the height of the issue he himself had challenged; his very earnestness had involved him in a great refusal. But the story is left unfinished, and though **he went away grieved** he did not go beyond the reach of the love with which Jesus had regarded his eager quest of life. "Perhaps there was more hope of him than if, at our Lord's word, he had impulsively

surrendered all that he had" (Latham, *Pastor Pastorum*). We may leave it where Jesus left it, **With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God.**

23. A sorrowful exclamation, prompted by disappointment and pity for the departing man. **How hardly!** *i.e.* with what difficulty!

24. Some editors (so R.V. marg.) omit the words **for them that trust in riches.** The saying then becomes an *extension* of ver. 23: hard for any man to make the sacrifice of whatever is keeping God out of his life, and for the rich man all but impossible (ver. 25). If the words are retained, there is a *limitation* to "them that *trust in* riches" of what had just been said of "them that *have* riches."

25. Various attempts have been made to literalise this saying by supposing that the word rendered **camel** really means "rope," or that **needle's eye** was the name given to a small postern gate: they are not successful, and show some lack of imagination. The proverb is quite in Eastern fashion.

26. Either "If not the rich with all the advantages which wealth confers, then who?" or (if the shorter reading in ver. 24 be the true one) "If so difficult for all, then who?" Perhaps the disciples understood, what is undoubtedly true and pertinent to this incident, that "attachment to the goods of this world exists in men of every condition; that the poor man will have nearly the same hesitation in leaving his hut as the rich man his palace" (Loisy).

27. Jesus lifts the possibility of "salvation" from the plane of human resolve and endeavour into a region where God works: the impossible

becomes possible through the grace of God and the power of His Spirit. "God knows well how to effect *miracles* of conversion. It is not at all by following one's natural inclinations that admission is gained into the kingdom of God, but by resisting them with Divine help" (Loisy).

28. So far as Peter can see, the disciples had fulfilled the conditions of entrance into the kingdom: it was natural just now to ask for some assurance of this. In Matthew the question is explicit: "What then shall we have?"

29. Not the disciples only but **every one** who has made sacrifice for Christ's sake shall receive his reward. In Matthew this is preceded by a special promise to the disciples (Matt. xix. 28; cf. ver. 37 below).

30. An exceptional promise of recompense in this life, modified by the addition **with persecutions** (Mark only). The recompense is expressed symbolically in terms of the things abandoned; possibly there is some reference to the spiritual kinship gained by the breaking of natural ties in loyalty to the gospel (cf. iii. 35, and note the joy of the early Christian fellowship, Acts ii. 44–47, iv. 32–35).

31. Jesus is not afraid to speak of reward for His followers; but to reckon on it, to estimate one's own or others' share in it, is to forget that "God seeth not as man seeth." Matthew illustrates the saying by the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 1–16); Luke gives it in another connection (xiii. 30).

Mark x. 32–34; cf. Matt. xx. 17–19 = Luke xviii. 31–34.

THIRD PREDICTION OF THE PASSION.

32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen
33 unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death,
34 and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Cf. viii. 31, ix. 31. The new features are the definite connection of His death with this present journey to Jerusalem, and the more precise details of the trial and condemnation. This very explicit *form* of the prediction may in part be coloured by the after fact.

32. Again one of the vivid pictures which we owe to Mark alone. For **and as they followed,** R.V. has "and they that followed": Jesus a little in front, absorbed and unapproachable; then the disciples, awe-stricken at the tension of a new purpose they could not understand; then a larger company, their eagerness to follow Jesus now chilled by vague foreboding of coming disaster.

33. **the Gentiles.** *I.e.,* the Roman civil authorities; cf. xv. 1.

Mark x. 35–45; cf. Matt. xx. 20–28 (Luke xxii. 24–27).

THE AMBITION OF JAMES AND JOHN.

35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him,
saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us
36 whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them,
37 What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto
him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand,
38 and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus
said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink
of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the
39 baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto
him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed
drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism
40 that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit
on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give;
but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.
41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much dis-
42 pleased with James and John. But Jesus called them to
him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are
accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over
them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.
43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be
44 great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever
45 of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For
even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but
to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The third prediction of the Passion is followed, like the second, by a story of ambition and jealousy within the Apostolic company, and by similar teaching as to the meaning of true greatness (cf. notes on ix. 33–37). This incident is especially memorable for the saying with which it closes (ver. 45).

35. The request they have in mind needs a little diplomacy: Jesus insists on frankness.

37. See n. on ver. 29. **James and John** seem to take literally the promise of the twelve thrones (Matt. xix. 28; cf. also the figure of a banquet, Matt. viii. 11; Mark xiv. 25). "What is in the mind of James and John is a banquet or great court function, in which the Messiah is the principal figure and His highest ministers sit next to Him. For these seats the 'sons of thunder' are already intriguing" (Menzies). The intrigue would seem to be specially aimed against the pre-eminence of Peter. In Matthew it is the mother who makes the request.

38. As before (ix. 34), they had seized upon their Master's words as to the coming glory, ignoring the warnings of His death.

cup. A Hebrew figure for man's portion of joy or sorrow: see Ps. xxiii. 5, lxxv. 8; Ezek. xxiii. 33, etc.; and cf. Mark xiv. 36.

baptism. An immersion in suffering: cf. Ps. xlii. 7, lxix. 1, 2, cxxiv. 4, 5; and cf. Luke xii. 50.

39. A too easy assent, soon to be tried and found wanting (xiv. 50). Yet Jesus did not question its sincerity, and Mark wrote with the knowledge that one at least of the two brothers had already suffered martyrdom (Acts xii. 2, in A.D. 44). According to one tradition, John was involved in a similar fate (Westminster N.T., St. John, p. 13). If, on the contrary, he lived to write the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel, dying peacefully in extreme old age, he had yet endured the martyrdom of banishment to Patmos (a "long-drawn-out living death," Ramsay), "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. i. 9).

40. Jesus has no power to grant their request even if He would: the chief places in His kingdom are already assigned (to whom and on what grounds does not appear). Matthew adds, "by my Father." Cf. xiii. 32.

41. They were all ready to dispute who should be greatest (ix. 34), but it was a mean thing that two of their number should thus seek to steal a march on the rest! With such indignation Jesus had no concern: what mattered was the spirit of rivalry which all shared, and this He rebuked with a repetition of the teaching of ix. 35.

42. The world-standard of greatness: **those who are accounted** (possibly the word contains a suggestion of apparent rule in contrast with the ideal of Jesus) **rulers,** show their characteristic quality in **lording it** over others. Luke has this saying in a context of his own (xxii. 24–30).

43. R.V., "But it is not so among you." The law of greatness for Christ's followers is essentially different. Cf. notes on ix. 35.

44. **servant.** Lit. "slave." A still deeper humility of service than that laid on the "minister."

45. **For even.** R.V., "For verily." The thought is not "if the Master, then so much more the disciple"; but "as the master, so the disciple." Matthew has "even as."

to give his life, etc. These are almost the only words which break the reticence of the Synoptic Gospels as to the *significance of the death of Christ* (cf. xiv. 24). Whatever else they may mean, they stand here as the culmination of the Messiah's ministry. He lived to serve, and in service He even gave up life itself. "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep"

(John x. 11). Since Peter's confession, Jesus had repeatedly spoken of His coming death and had taught that those who would be His disciples must be ready to follow Him even in the way of the Cross (viii. 34). Now He affirms that His death will be to many what the **ransom** is to the slave whom it sets free. *Why*, and *how*, are questions which have gathered round this saying a large and important literature, but they are questions which this Gospel leaves without answer. We may be content to note that Jesus Himself believed that His death would save, and to find the commentary on His saying in what Christianity has wrought for human life and history unto this day.

Mark x. 46–52; cf. Matt. xx. 29–34 = Luke xviii. 35–43.

BLIND BARTIMÆUS.

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side
47 begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David,
48 have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal,
49 Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise;
50 he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose,
51 and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my

52 sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Jesus had now left Peræa, and crossing the ford of Jordan had reached Jericho, some five miles from the river and fifteen from Jerusalem, His final halting-place on His journey. The visit was marked by a cure in which the suppliant openly, and now unrebuked by Jesus (cf. n. on i. 10 and reff.), acclaims Him as Messiah: the incident prepares for and gives the Master's sanction to the "triumphal entry." Mark's account is again the fullest and most graphic: the others show some quite unimportant discrepancies on which harmonists have bestowed much vain labour (Matthew "two blind men," Luke "as he drew nigh unto Jericho"). Luke alone gives a second incident of this visit in the story of Zacchæus (xix. 1–10).

46. R.V., "the son of Timæus, Bartimæus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side." Only Mark gives the name, and with a curious redundancy: perhaps "the son of Timæus," which is the meaning of Bartimæus, is an explanatory note which has intruded into the text.

47. **Jesus the Nazarene.** Cf. i. 24, xiv. 67, xvi. 6. The people's name for Jesus (cf. Matt. xxi. 11), turned to contempt by Pilate (John xix. 19), proudly accepted by the early Church (Acts ii. 22, iii. 6, etc.). The familiar cadence, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," is from Luke.

son of David. A designation of Messiah, here for the first time in Mark (cf. xi. 10, xii. 35 n.).

48. **charged.** R.V., "rebuked" (i. 25, etc.).

The crowd did not object to the title, for it must have been rumours of their belief that Jesus was Messiah that had reached Bartimæus and stirred his hopes of cure. Possibly they were annoyed because he had blurted out prematurely the cry they were keeping back till the entry into the city: more probably, simply because this beggar's interruption was disturbing to their progress. Popular enthusiasms can be very selfish.

49. The change of tone and the eagerness of the coming are details peculiar to Mark.

50. **rose.** R.V., "sprang up."

51. Jesus elicits the appeal of an undoubting confidence in His power to heal.

Lord. R.V., "Rabboni," another form of "Rabbi," said to be a still more honourable title: only here and John xx. 16, where it is explained as "Master" (lit. "Teacher").

52. The instant cure without the usual touch (cf. viii. 23) is noteworthy. For the words of Jesus cf. v. 34.

followed. Luke adds, "glorifying God."

Mark xi. 1–11; cf. Matt. xxi. 1–11 = Luke xi. 28–38 (John xii. 12–19).

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two
2 of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never
3 man sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need
4 of him; and straightway he will send him hither. And

they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they
5 loose him. And certain of them that stood there said
6 unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let
7 them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast
8 their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches of the trees, and strawed them in the way.
9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name
10 of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna
11 in the highest. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

By the manner of His entry into Jerusalem Jesus for the first time openly declared Himself to be the Messiah: see n. on i. 11. The new claim is not obtruded in the events and teachings which follow, but it underlies and explains them, finally bringing upon Him the sentence of death (xiv. 61–64). It is significant that more than one-third of Mark's Gospel is devoted to this last week: the fragmentary record now becomes a diary.

1. **Bethphage:** Supposed, though doubtfully, to be an outlying suburb of the city, on the west slope of the Mount of Olives. If so, Mark gives the three names in the reverse order of approach.

2. Compare the instructions given xiv. 12–16. In both cases there may have been a pre-arrangement, though it is doubtful if the narrator is aware of it.

colt. *I.e.* of an ass, as in Matthew and John.

whereon never man sat, and therefore fit for sacred use. Cf. Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3; 2 Sam. vi. 3. This detail is absent from Matthew and John, and perhaps hardly formed part of the instructions.

3. R.V., "and straightway he will send him back hither." Part of the message to the owner of the colt is a promise that the animal shall be returned when done with. A homely touch, but quite in keeping with the other details. A.V. follows Matthew's version.

4. **in a place where two ways met.** R.V., "in the open street." The circumstantial details suggest the recollection of an eye-witness.

7. The lack of a saddle is supplied by **cloaks.**

8. R.V., "and others branches [Gr. "layers of leaves"], which they had cut from the fields." The road is made smooth by their homage; cf. 2 Kings ix. 13.

9. The acclamation of the crowd, varied in each of the four accounts, is founded upon Ps. cxviii. 25, 26, a song of exultant thanksgiving for national deliverance, the occasion of which is not known.

Hosanna. The Aramaic form of the Hebrew words of the psalm, which mean "Save now." The word seems to have lost its original significance of a *prayer* and to have become an ejaculation of *praise* or *rejoicing,* an *Hurrah!* This appears from the very retention of the Aramaic word, instead of the obvious translation if a prayer was intended, and from the phrase in Matthew, "Hosanna to the son of David," where "Save

now" gives no sense. Indeed, the mind of an exultant crowd is not often attuned to prayer, and this crowd was no exception. Their hopes were of the earth, earthy: their enthusiasm, unsustained by high ideal and quickly disappointed of its expected triumph, passed into hate.

10. R.V., "Blessed *is* the kingdom that cometh, *the kingdom* of our father David." This *addition* to the words of the psalm shows the bent of the popular expectation: Jesus was to restore the temporal glories of the Davidic kingdom. Luke has "Blessed is the King that cometh": perhaps from a recollection of the prophecy of Zechariah (ix. 9), quoted by Matthew (xxi. 5) and by John (xii. 15), and probably underlying this whole account.

Hosanna in the highest. *I.e.*, in heaven. Again praise rather than prayer: at most an "hurrah" dignified into "God save the king!" Luke has "glory in the highest."

11. See n. on iii. 5. The significance of that silent **look** would appear on the morrow.

Matthew and Luke, with less probability, place the cleansing of the Temple on the day of entry.

Bethany. Perhaps to lodge with friends, perhaps to "bivouac among the hills" (Swete, cf. Luke xxi. 37). At xiv. 3 we find Him in the house of Simon the leper. The familiar association of Bethany with the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, is wholly derived from the Fourth Gospel.

This retirement from the crowded city was repeated every evening (ver. 19, R.V.).

Mark xi. 12–14; cf. Matt. xxi. 18–19a.

THE BARREN FIG TREE.

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany,
13 he was hungry: and seeing a fig tree afar off, having
leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon:
and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves;
14 for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and
said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.
And his disciples heard it.

This incident is related, with differences, by Matthew also, not by Luke. For comments see notes on vers. 20–25.

13. This was March or April, and the earliest figs were not ripe till June. But the brave show of foliage made a profession which it did not fulfil.

14. He answered the silent challenge of the tree. The words addressed to it are the expression of a wish, "May no man eat," but in ver. 21 they are interpreted as a *curse*. In Matthew they are a prediction, "There shall be no fruit."

Mark xi. 15–19; cf. Matt. xxi. 12–17 = Luke xix. 45–48.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into
the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and
bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the
moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;
16 and would not suffer that any man should carry any
17 vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto
them, Is it not written, *My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den*

18 *of thieves.* And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.
19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

There is ample evidence that a regular market for the sale of all things necessary for the sacrifices, and for money-changing, was carried on within the Temple precincts (probably in the Court of the Gentiles), under regulation of and to the profit of the priests: see Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, bk. iii. c. v. This bold action of Jesus would touch the popular conscience, grown callous by custom: it would be welcomed, too, by the people who had suffered much and long from priestly extortion. Hence it was passed over with only a half-hearted and impotent challenge from the authorities (vers. 27–33).

All the Synoptics agree in placing this incident in the last week: John connects a similar act with a Passover visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the outset of the Ministry (John ii. 13–22). The difficulty—whether *two* cleansings, or, if *one* only, whether the dating of the Fourth Gospel or that of the Synoptics is to be preferred—is part of a larger problem (see n. on i. 14, 15). It must suffice here to note that the action of Jesus is an assertion of Messianic authority which could not, consistently with Mark's development of the history, have been made at the earlier period: the place given to it in John is quite in keeping with the recognition which that Gospel accords from the first to Jesus as Messiah (cf. John i. 29, 41, 45, 49, ii. 11).

16. Even the use made of the Temple precincts

as a short cut in the ordinary traffic of the city is forbidden. Mark only.

17. R.V., "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." The prophecy (Isa. lvi. 7) speaks of the bringing in of the Gentiles to the community of Israel; debarred from the sacrifices which only the circumcised could offer, a yet higher use of the Temple was open to them in the sacrifice of prayer. "Thus in a certain sense the 'Court of the Gentiles' became the holiest part of the Temple" (Cheyne); and *this* court, standing symbol of the universality and therefore of the spirituality of Israel's worship, had been degraded into a noisy cattle-market!

R.V., "a den of robbers." A phrase sufficiently apt to the extortions practised upon the worshippers. In the original context (Jer. vii. 11) it is used in scathing denunciation of those who cover up all manner of moral abominations with the cloak of religion.

18. Cf. xii. 12, xiv. 1, 11.

19. R.V., "And every evening he went forth out of the city."

Mark xi. 20–26; cf. Matt. xxi. 19b–22.

THE WITHERED FIG TREE.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig
21 tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree
22 which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus
23 answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into

the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe
that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he
24 shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you,
What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that
25 ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye
stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any:
that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you
26 your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will
your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

20. This sequel to what had happened on the previous morning is very naturally told. Matthew is different.

22. The lesson drawn does not, as we might expect, deal with the unreal profession which had brought destruction on the tree, but with the power of faith to work miracles.

23. The hyperbolic expression is perhaps suggested by the hill they were traversing and the deep-lying waters of the Dead Sea, well within view.

24. R.V., "believe that ye have received them." In the very moment and act of prayer the answer is already come.

25. The injunction to **forgive**, elsewhere (Matt. vi. 14, xviii. 35) made the condition of effective prayer for *forgiveness*, is here linked, not very obviously, with the efficacy of prayer in general. Perhaps the connection is due to Mark.

26. R.V. omits this verse: an insertion from Matt. vi. 15.

This story of the cursing of the fig tree undoubtedly raises difficulties. Jesus cannot have used His miraculous powers in resentment against an offending tree, and in seeking an interpretation

which will justify the act we are led beyond any indications given by the narrative itself. It is true that the thoughts of Jesus were just now filled with the all but hopeless religious condition of Israel (cf. ver. 17, xii. 1–11; Matthew adds other similar teaching): He may well see in this fig tree "a symbol of Israel with his immense and gorgeous religious apparatus and his scanty yield of the true fruits of religion" (Menzies). In this case there is no resentment for disappointed hunger, and no question of the culpability of the tree: the action is wholly symbolic, an "acted parable" of imminent judgment on the false profession of Israel. But there is a *reserve* about our Lord's miracles which this use of superhuman power for purely parabolic purpose seems to break. Moreover, the context gives no hint of the teaching which the "acted parable" is supposed to convey: in place of moral drawn from "nothing but leaves," it is the prodigy of the withering that is used to teach that nothing is too hard for faith. Probably the records do not enable us to see clearly the whole of the facts: it is to be noted that while in Mark the effect of the "curse" was not noticed by the disciples till the following day, in Matthew the tree instantly withered, the very suddenness of the effect causing the disciples to marvel. Luke omits the incident, but he alone records the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (xiii. 6–9), which, though placed by him at an earlier period, seems more congruous to the teaching of these last days. The theme of that parable also is the fruitlessness of Israel, though it has a note of long-suffering and hopefulness, very Christlike, but absent from the irrevocable doom pronounced upon the fig tree of our story.

It is not surprising (though this "solution" of the difficulty raises difficulties of its own) that many interpreters regard the "acted parable" recorded by Matthew and Mark as another form, altered in tradition, of the spoken parable preserved only by Luke.

Mark xi. 27–33; Matt. xxi. 23–27 = Luke xx. 1–8.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED.

27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking
in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and
28 the scribes, and the elders, and say unto him, By what
authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this
29 authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said
unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer
me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.
30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?
31 answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying,
If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did
32 ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they
feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a
33 prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus,
We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them,
Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The first of several encounters between Jesus and the Jewish authorities, in which the wisdom of Jesus and the fury of His opponents, restrained only by His popularity with the multitude, are vividly depicted.

27. A quasi-official deputation from the Sanhedrin, each section being represented.

28. **these things.** Not only the breaking up of the Temple-market, but the teaching in the

Temple by which it was followed, and probably the tumultuous entry of two days ago. The question was reasonable and inevitable. They were the official guardians of religion: what kind of personal authority was this which acted as it chose and paid no heed to theirs? Or if indeed He claimed to be vested with an external, delegated authority of the sort which alone they recognised, who conferred it upon him?

29. The answering of one question by another was familiar to Rabbinic method.

30. This question of Jesus is not a brilliant evasion but is strictly pertinent to the issue they have raised. The recent ministry of **John the Baptist** was outside official religion: he appeared without credentials, taught with authority, denounced the religious leaders, baptized. Such a ministry must provoke precisely the same question as that raised by the acts of Jesus. How does official religion answer it? Was John's authority personal, derived from God alone, or was it delegated to him by men? If they say **from heaven,** they vindicate Jesus and condemn themselves; if **from men,** their credit for religious insight is gone, and they are in peril from popular tumult (Luke, "all the people will stone us").

31. Cf. Luke vii. 29, 30. Whether, if they gave this reply, Jesus would have appealed to John's testimony concerning Himself does not appear.

33. A lame and impotent conclusion, abdicating all right to sit in judgment upon "a greater than John."

Mark xii. 1–12; cf. Matt. xxi. 33–46=Luke xx. 9–19.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD.

And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it
2 out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vine-
3 yard. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him
4 away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in
5 the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many
6 others; beating some, and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last
7 unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said amongst themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.
8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of
9 the vineyard. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and
10 will give the vineyard unto others. And have ye not read this scripture; *The stone which the builders rejected is*
11 *become the head of the corner: this was the Lord's doing,*
12 *and it is marvellous in our eyes*? And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

The connection with the preceding section is close. Jesus had taken authority to condemn the rulers for faithlessness to their trust (xi. 17, 30), and now emphasises His condemnation in this parable of judgment, spoken against *them*, i.e. the

rulers (ver. 12). The significance which attaches to the main details of the story makes it rather an allegory than a parable (see n. on iv. 14–20). Incidentally the story reveals the Messianic consciousness of Jesus (vers. 6, 10), but the stress is on the guilt of Israel.

1. **parables.** The plural may mean that Mark knows of the other two added here by Matthew (The Two Sons and The King's Marriage Feast), or, more generally, "in parabolic fashion."

The imagery of God's care for Israel—a well equipped **vineyard,** protected by hedge and watch-tower—is taken from Isa. v. 1, 2, where it leads up to the moral, "and it brought forth wild grapes."

winefat. O.E. for "winevat," the lower trough which received the juice of the trodden grapes. R.V., "winepress," the upper trough in which the grapes were crushed. The tenants were to make payment in kind.

2–5. A graphic representation of Israel's treatment of God's messengers and spokesmen, the prophets: cf. Matt. xxiii. 29–37; Acts vii. 51–53.

6. R.V., "He had yet one, a beloved son." A double contrast of the *one son* with the *many servants* (lit. slaves) of ver. 5. The words belong to the story and are not to be unduly pressed, but they at least contain a claim on the part of Jesus to stand in the line of the prophets, and to represent God with a unique authority which made His mission the final appeal of the Divine patience.

7. A counsel of all but incredible folly, but fitting description of the blindness which was hurrying to the crime of Calvary.

8. **murder** followed by **outrage** upon the dead body. In Matthew and Luke the son is first cast

out, then slain (cf. John xix. 17; Heb. xiii. 12, 13).

9. God, long ignored as absent, had yet to be reckoned with. The fate which must overtake these husbandmen is so obvious that in Matthew it is the answer of the hearers to the question of Jesus. Luke is like Mark, but shows how the moral struck home by the alarmed protest of the hearers, "God forbid."

10. From Ps. cxviii. 22, 23, where the **rejected stone** is Israel, flung aside by the world-powers as of no account, yet raised in the purpose of God to the place of highest honour. The text became a favourite one with the early Christian Church: cf. Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 4–7; Eph. ii. 20. The previous context here has spoken of rejection and vengeance; the quotation speaks of rejection and vindication of the rejected. Matthew and Luke add the note of vengeance in their reference to the other stones of Isa. viii. 14, 15 and Dan. ii. 44, 45.

12. Cf. xi. 18.

Mark xii. 13–17; cf. Matt. xxii. 15–22 = Luke xx. 20–26.

TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR.

13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of
14 the Herodians, to catch him in his words. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?
15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

16 bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought
it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and
17 superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. And
Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the
things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are
God's. And they marvelled at him.

Mark now relates a series of three questions upon outstanding matters of belief and practice, put to Jesus by various sections of the religious leaders, with the hope of snaring Him in talk. In each instance the answer not only avoids the snare but amazes all by the lofty truth of its teaching.

13. **they send.** *I.e.*, the members of the Sanhedrin (xi. 27, xii. 12).

Pharisees and Herodians. Cf. n. on iii. 6. Both, from differing motives, were opposed to the Roman rule, but submitted as yet to the inevitable.

14. A striking testimony to the impression of fearless sincerity which Jesus had made even upon those who would use it for His undoing.

tribute. The taxes (specially the poll-tax) payable by the Jews, as Roman subjects, into the Imperial treasury. Was this payment lawful, *i.e.* in accordance with Jewish Law (cf. ii. 24, 26, vi. 18, x. 2)? It might be politic, or necessary; but policy put no restraint upon this man's fearless utterance of truth, nor could necessity fetter one whom the people already acclaimed as the expected Deliverer. Surely His answer must raise the standard of revolt and ring down Rome upon Him (Luke xx. 20)? Or if it confirmed Israel's servitude, what of the people's expectancy?

15. The motives underlying their fair words and the specious request for a "yes" or "no" to a

plain question are laid bare by the word **tempt**, *i.e.* put to the test with malicious intent.

penny. The silver denarius of Imperial coinage, in which the taxes were reckoned and paid. Other local money, not bearing the Emperor's image, was in common use, and the "penny" had to be fetched.

16. The obverse of the coin bore the head of the Emperor Tiberius, surrounded by the (abbreviated) inscription "Tiberius Augustus, son of the divine Augustus."

17. They had spoken of *giving* tribute: Jesus says **render**, *i.e.* pay as a debt. This symbol of Roman government was not a badge of servitude, but pledge of Rome's protection and civilisation: even the most passive acceptance of the Imperial rule and all that it meant carried with it obligations which no higher claim could disallow. And then, in one illuminating phrase, Jesus sets the whole thing in its true light: **and unto God the things that are God's** They had conceived of the claims of **Cæsar** and of **God** as rival and antagonistic: He resolves the contradiction. The true Theocracy has place for all human relations, which indeed are of Divine ordinance (Rom. xiii. 1). The claim of God conflicts with no legitimate claim of man—family, social, or political—but enfolds, interpenetrates, interprets them all. They cherished vain dreams of a new world-power under the fiction of a "kingdom of God": if they but knew it, the kingdom of God was "in the midst of them," needing no revolution for its attainment.

Mark xii. 18–27; cf. Matt. xxii. 23–33=Luke x. 27–38.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is
19 no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master,
Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave
his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his
brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his
20 brother. Now there were seven brethren: and the first
21 took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took
her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third
22 likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed:
23 last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection
therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be
24 of them? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus
answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err,
because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of
25 God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they
neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the
26 angels which are in heaven. And as touching the dead,
that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how
in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of
Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?
27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living:
ye therefore do greatly err.

This is the only mention of the Sadducees by Mark. Since, however, they were the priestly aristocracy, they are virtually included in each reference to the "chief priests" who were sworn to destroy Jesus (xi. 18, etc.). Their question, therefore, would seem to be prompted by hostility to Jesus rather than to their rivals the Pharisees. They knew that He shared the popular belief in

the resurrection, and they sought to discredit His teaching with the people by making it ridiculous. In a sense their conundrum, probably a stock one of the schools, was not unfair, for the teaching of the Rabbis as to the future life was grossly materialistic; and the jesting extravagance of the case supposed must not blind us to a real problem for faith, the survival into the life beyond of those human interests and fellowships in which the worth of life here so largely consists. Jesus clears this problem from its earthly accretions, and finds its answer in God.

18. Cf. Acts xxiii. 8. In denying the resurrection they took their stand on the Law, rejecting Jewish tradition with its elaborated doctrine of angels, demons, and the future life.

19–23. A conceivable case, founded on the law of Deut. xxv. 5, 6, though the custom had largely fallen into disuse. The point is, "If Moses and the Law had had any thought of a resurrection they would have been very careful not to create such an anomaly" (Loisy).

24 Jesus rebukes their ignorance of the very scriptures on which they relied, and their scepticism. The latter point is dealt with first.

25. The legal conventions of earth have no relevance in heaven. For the rest—the carrying on into a future life of what on earth is of real value and therefore permanent — there is the **power of God.**

26. R.V., "in the book of Moses, in *the place concerning* the Bush, how God spake," etc. *I.e.*, at the section beginning Ex. iii. 1 entitled "The Bush"; cf. Rom. xi. 2, "in (the section concerning) Elijah." The point of the quotation does not lie

in the "I am," as if *this* asserted that the long-past relationship still continued: the verb "am" is not expressed either in the Greek or Hebrew. It rather lies in the thrice reiterated "God," as the next verse shows.

27. The relationship between man and God is essentially a living one: death would not simply end it, but would contradict it. **God, to be God, is and must be the God of living men.** Thus Jesus rests the whole case for immortality upon faith in God. Cf. Heb. xi., especially vers. 10, 13–16, 39, 40.

Mark xii. 28–34; cf. Matt. xxii. 34–40 (Luke x. 25–37).

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of
29 all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one
30 Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and
31 with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater
32 than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there
33 is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself,
34 is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Mark does not represent this third question as put from unfriendly motives. Matthew has "tempting him," and omits the matter of vers. 32–34. Luke omits the whole section, but records a very similar question at an earlier period, with the story of the Good Samaritan to show what love to one's neighbour means (Luke x. 25–37).

28. **Which, lit. what kind of commandment is first of all?** "As we should say, In what direction are we to look for the first commandment?" (Menzies).

29. Jesus goes straight to what is most fundamental and spiritual, citing in answer the first sentences of the Jewish *Shĕma* (so called from the Hebrew of its first word, *Hear*) or confession of faith, repeated twice a day by every adult male Israelite (it consisted of Deut. vi. 4–9, xi. 13–21; Num. xv. 37–41). Jehovah alone is God, and claims the undivided loyalty of every faculty of man.

R.V., "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." "The Lord" is Jehovah.

30. Broadly speaking, the **heart** stands for the whole mental life, which manifests itself in emotion or affection (**soul**), intellect (**mind**), and will (**strength**).

31. Jesus adds a second commandment, which, as used by Him, interprets and vitalises the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue. The words are from Lev. xix. 18, where they occur quite incidentally, and, as the context shows, specify the Jew's obligation only to his fellow-Jew (cf. Matt. v. 43); hence the question of Luke x. 29, "And who is my neighbour?" with its answer in the "Good Samaritan." The pro-

minence given to this commandment in Christian teaching is noticeable in Jas. ii. 8 ("the royal law"); Rom. xiii. 8–10; Gal. v. 14: see also Matt. vii. 12.

32, 33. This approving rejoinder by the scribe is given by Mark alone. The contrast between love to God and man, and sacrifices, reminds of 1 Sam xv. 22; Mic. vi. 6–8.

34. The last clause of this verse appears in each Synoptic, but at different points of the controversy.

Mark xii. 35–37; cf. Matt. xxii. 41–46 = Luke xx. 41–44.

THE SON OF DAVID.

35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of
36 David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I*
37 *make thine enemies thy footstool.* David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

In the course of His public teaching, resumed after the series of encounters just closed, Jesus challenges the familiar dictum of the religious teachers of Israel that the promised Messiah is to be a lineal descendant of David (see x. 48, xi. 10 n.). He does so because this belief, based on such O.T. scriptures as Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, Is. xi. 1, Jer. xxiii. 5, had gathered about it worldly expectations of a restored monarchy, withdrawing men's thoughts from more spiritual prophecies of the Christ and degrading the Messianic ideal. While this conception prevailed, the mind of the nation

was closed against the ideals and aims of Jesus. And so He asks whether, with any *consistency*, the scribes can really hold and teach this view of the Messiah. The Christ, son of David! But that is not how David himself speaks of Him. In an inspired psalm (Ps. cx.) he writes of the *Messiah*, as the scribes admit, in language which exalts Him far above the relationship of son to father or the dignity of any earthly king: to David He is "his Lord," seated in heaven at the right hand of Jehovah. The whole point of the argument as directed against the scribes is to show that their teaching about the Christ does not square with their own interpretation of their own Scriptures, and so to suggest higher thoughts of His Person and His Mission. Jesus assumes, with the scribes, that the psalm was written by David. It is almost certain that it was not; but this finding of criticism affects neither the force nor the propriety of our Lord's argument, nor is His authority to be invoked on a question of authorship which did not come within the horizon of His thought.

36. **The Lord.** *I.e.*, Jehovah. **my lord.** A title of respect, especially used in addressing kings. Other N.T. reff. to this passage are Acts ii. 34, 35; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13, x. 13, etc.

Mark xii. 38–40; cf. Luke xx. 45–47; Matt. xxiii. 1–39.

THE SCRIBES.

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the
scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love saluta-
39 tions in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the

40 synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

This warning against the scribes as a class (there were exceptions, vers. 28–34) is but a summary of the long and scathing denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees preserved by Matthew (chap. xxiii.; cf. also Luke xi. 37–54). The sins condemned are vanity, avarice, hypocrisy. For **doctrine, rooms, damnation,** R.V. has "teaching, places, condemnation." The **greater condemnation** is reserved for wickedness parading as piety.

Mark xii. 41–44; cf. Luke xxi. 1–4.

THE WIDOW'S "MITE."

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that
42 were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.
43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:
44 for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

This incident as placed by Mark makes a beautiful close to the last stormy day of Christ's public teaching: the simple piety of a poor widow stands out in contrast with the splendid hypocrisies just denounced. The phrase "the widow's mite" has sacred associations, but it should not be forgotten that she really gave *two mites*, when she might have kept back one for her needs.

41. **the treasury.** A colonnade in the "Women's Court" of the Temple, in which were placed thirteen chests of brass, like inverted trumpets, to receive offerings for the Temple-service and for the poor.

42. Lit. "*one* poor widow," singled out by Jesus from the *many* who were coming.

mite. The smallest of Jewish copper coins, 2 to the Roman "quadrans" (**farthing**), 128 to the "denarius" (xii. 15): worth about one-third of an English farthing.

44. They gave out of what was superfluous to them, she out of what she lacked: they gave much, she gave all.

> "Two mites, two drops—yet all her house and land—
> Falle from a steady heart though trembling hand:
> The other's wanton wealth foams high and brave.
> The other cast away; she only gave."
>
> RICHARD CRASHAW.

Mark xiii.; cf. Matt. xxiv. = Luke xxi. 5-36.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and
2 what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him
4 privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?
5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest
6 any man deceive you: for many shall come in my name,

7 saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And when
ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not
troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall
8 not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and
kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes
in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles:
9 these are the beginnings of sorrows. But take heed to
yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and
in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be
brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony
10 against them. And the gospel must first be published
11 among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and
deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall
speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be
given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that
12 speak, but the Holy Ghost. Now the brother shall betray
the brother to death, and the father the son; and children
shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to
13 be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my
name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the
14 same shall be saved. But when ye shall see the abomination
of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,
standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains:
15 and let him that is on the housetop not go down into the
house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his
16 house: and let him that is in the field not turn back
17 again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that
are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.
19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from
the beginning of the creation which God created unto this
20 time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had
shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the
elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the
21 days. And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is

22 Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: for false
Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs
and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.
23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.
24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be
25 darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the
stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven
26 shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man
27 coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And
then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together
his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of
28 the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. Now learn a
parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and
29 putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: so ye
in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to
30 pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say
unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these
31 things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but
32 my words shall not pass away. But of that day and that
hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in
33 heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed,
34 watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For
the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left
his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every
man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.
35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of
the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-
36 crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he
37 find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto
all, Watch.

Jesus predicts the utter destruction of the Temple: in answer to a question of the disciples as to *when* this event will happen and *by what signs* it will be heralded, He utters a long discourse on things to come, which is beset with grave diffi-

culties of interpretation. Comment on details must be prefaced by some inquiry into the meaning of the discourse as a whole.

(1) The **question** of the disciples concerns only the foretold destruction of the Temple. (In Matthew (xxiv. 3) it refers also to "thy coming and the end of the world"; but either the disciples imagined that all three events would take place simultaneously, or the question has been expanded in tradition to suit the supposed double reference of the answer. Mark's form, followed by Luke, seems more original: a *single* prediction is followed by a *single* inquiry.)

(2) The **answer** has been commonly interpreted —partly because of the double question in Matthew and partly because of the language employed—as referring not to one event but to two: the one imminent, and fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.; the other, the end of the world, still to come. But the prophecy as it stands really does not allow of this double reference: it is not possible to pick out some parts as describing the nearer event and others one more remote. A closely linked succession of trials and catastrophes leads up to the *one* consummation, the "coming of the Son of man," ver. 26 (for the connecting links see vers. 7, 8, 13, 14, 24). And at the close of the one continuous prophecy comes the clear statement, "This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished."

(3) In its **substance**, then, the prophecy looks forward to a great crisis within that generation. Allusions to this, under the double aspect of judgment, and the coming of the kingdom of God or the coming of the Son of man, are by no means rare in our Lord's teaching (cf. i. 15, viii. 38, ix. 1, xiv. 62;

Luke xviii. 8, etc.); while in ix. 1 it is specifically declared that some of the disciples will live to see it. It would be strange, too, if the expectation of the Lord's coming manifestly held by the early Christian Church had no reasonable ground in Christ's own words: cf. Acts i. 11, iii. 18–21, etc.; 1 Thess. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 13–v. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 1–12; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, vii. 29–31, xv. 51, xvi. 22 ("Our Lord cometh"), etc. The evidence suggests convincingly that "our Lord's teaching must have been largely eschatological" (Sanday).

(4) In its **form** the prophecy has many of the characteristics of Jewish apocalyptic literature, a large class of writing, of which each Canon of the Scriptures contains one example (*Daniel* and *Revelation*). Thus, the successive stages of "the beginning of travail" (ver. 8), "tribulation" (ver. 19), and the final ushering in of the crisis (vers. 24–26) are familiar apocalyptic features (cf. the Woes of Rev. ix. 12, xi. 14): so is the poetical imagery of vers. 8, 14, 19, 20, 24–27. Other portions of the discourse lack this apocalyptic element: Jesus refuses to prophesy (ver. 32), but exhorts the disciples to fidelity, patience, and watchfulness (vers. 5, 6, 9–13, 21, 22, 33–37). It is this blending of *ethical* teaching, entirely characteristic of Jesus, and paralleled elsewhere (cf. Matt. x. 16–23) with *prediction* which in form and substance is strange to His lips, that has raised doubts whether the discourse has not suffered interpolation. Within recent years there has been the supposed "discovery" that certain sections can easily be separated and explained as a "Little Apocalypse," probably of Jewish-Christian origin, written shortly before the fall of Jerusalem to

warn and comfort the Christian community. To this source are attributed (with some difference of opinion in details) vers. 7, 8, 14–20, 24–27. But this hypothesis, not free from inherent difficulties, lays hands too violently on the fidelity of evangelic tradition to be readily accepted, and does not, perhaps, sufficiently recognise the likelihood that our Lord could and would, at this supreme crisis, expand former utterances of His on the "last things" in prophetic discourse (cf. § *3 supra*). It is certain that what He said has been modified in tradition (as the differences in the records show), and very possibly it has been coloured by the thought and imagery of current Apocalypses. The discourse may be composite, but this leaves it still probable that even its apocalyptic sections are founded upon actual words of Jesus.

(5) The **one event** of which Jesus spoke was the coming of the Son of man (ver. 26). It is clear from the discourse that His *purpose*, like that of every true prophet, was ethical, not to foretell, but to warn and forearm: the *fact* of which He spoke is so clothed in symbol that its outlines are only vaguely discerned. But was the event He had in mind fulfilled within that generation, and if so, how? Our answer must be halting, partly because we cannot be sure that we have His words without change or addition, partly because "when we get on to the ground of the ultimate consciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ we must restrain our words and not speak as though we knew more than we do" (Sanday). To the High Priest He declared "*henceforth* (Luke, "*from this time forward*") ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt.

xxvi. 64), as though the "coming" was conceived as *continuous,* begun when He left the earth. Whatever may have been the exact meaning of the prediction of Mark ix. 1, it found an ample fulfilment at Pentecost. And if our Lord's insight into the moral forces at work towards judgment and destruction upon Judaism found expression in prophecy of impending doom, that catastrophe was indeed a "coming of the Son of man in power." For it made a new world, and set free the spiritual forces of the gospel of the kingdom of God.

5. The opening words suggest rather a rebuke to the question than an answer to it; cf. ver. 33, and see Luke xvii. 20, 21.

6. **I am** *Christ.* R.V., "I am *he.*" The **in my name** seems to mean, pretending to powers which belong only to Messiah.

7, 8. No attempt need be made to identify these warnings with actual history: they are part of the apocalyptic picture (cf. Rev. vi.), **the beginning of travail** out of which the new order is to be born. The stress is on the injunction **be ye not troubled.**

9–13. Jesus warns His disciples of what they must be prepared to suffer for His sake. Parallels are found in Matt. x. 16–23; Luke xii. 11, 12, in contexts where there is no question of signs of "the end." Here the apocalyptic note is only faintly heard (in vers. 10, 13) and does not appear very relevant.

9. **councils.** Local Jewish courts, as well as the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem.

rulers. Official representatives of Rome.

against them. Rather, "unto them" (R.V.); cf. i. 44, vi. 11. The *purpose* of these trials is that the gospel may be preached in high places (cf. Acts iv., v., vii., xxvi.; Phil. i. 12–14, etc.).

10. R.V., "preached unto all the nations." The word **first** makes this predicted world-wide spread of the gospel a sign of "the end": Matthew adds explicitly, "and then shall the end come" (xxiv. 14). But the words are primarily an encouragement to the disciples in their task and an admonition to "take heed to themselves" in view of so lofty a responsibility. So far as their fulfilment is to be regarded as a sign of "the end," they do not necessarily carry us beyond an event falling within that generation: see Matt. x. 23; Col. i. 6, 23.

11. **take no thought.** R.V., "be not anxious" (cf. for the word Matt. vi. 25).

neither do ye premeditate. R.V. omits this clause. The necessity of self-discipline and preparation has already been enjoined in "take heed to yourselves": this promise does not condone neglect of means, but assures of Divine aid in emergency of peril.

12. **Now.** R.V., "And." Profession of Christ will cause family discord and unnatural hatred.

13. All this is to be **endured**: hatred, peril, death itself to be faced with courage and fidelity. And the promise is that he who persists in such endurance shall be **saved**, *i.e.* shall survive all that is against him, and be brought safe into the future blessedness; cf. 1 Pet. i. 9. Luke has this saying in the striking form, "In your patience ye shall win your lives."

14–23. The discourse resumes its apocalyptic character, interrupted since ver. 8: the "beginning

of travail" is succeeded by the "tribulation," of an intensity graphically pictured in vers. 19, 20. The "when?" and "what sign?" of ver. 4, hitherto put aside, now receive answer. Jesus speaks of a mysterious happening which was to be the signal for precipitate flight, and describes in detail the horrors attendant on an event as yet forty years distant in the future. For Luke's version of the vaguer indications of Mark leaves no doubt that the Evangelists understood this section of the prophecy to refer to the siege and fall of Jerusalem (Mark xiii. 14 = Luke xxi. 20, "But when ye see Jerusalem encompassed with armies"; xxi. 24, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles"). It is difficult to believe that the prophecy as it stands was spoken by Jesus: this doubt is confirmed by closer study of Mark's version and of the differences between the three accounts.

14. This verse is one of the outstanding examples of the *priority* of Mark: see Introduction.

the abomination of desolation. The word "abomination" is specially used in the O.T. of idols and idol-worship (cf. Rom. ii. 22, "*abhorrest* idols"); the whole phrase is taken from Dan. xi. 31, xii. 11 (R.V.), "the abomination that maketh desolate." Daniel's prophecy refers to events narrated in 1 Macc. i., the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to abolish Judaism, accompanied by the profanation of the Temple, the suspension of the sacrifices, and (in 168 B.C.) the building of a small idol-altar ("an abomination of desolation," 1 Macc. i. 54) upon the altar of burnt-offering. The outlook of the words as used here cannot with certainty be referred to any definite event. Perhaps they mean no more than the desecration

of the Holy Land by heathen armies (so Luke); or they may express the dread of some specific profanation of the Temple resembling that perpetrated by Antiochus, or by the Emperor Caligula in attempting to erect a statue of himself.

let him that readeth understand. Attention is called to the importance of noting and understanding this sign of the coming tribulation. The "readeth" shows that these cannot be words of Jesus: He would have said "heareth." (In Matthew, where He makes specific reference to "Daniel the prophet," the words might possibly be His warning to the *reader of Daniel* to understand what he reads: not very naturally, for it is not Daniel's prophecy that needs to be understood, but the sign given by the fact now predicted.) The parenthesis is either an exceptional comment from the Evangelist, writing, we may suppose, in near view of the fulfilment of the prophecy, or it belongs to a *writing* of apocalyptic character which he is incorporating in his record of a discourse of Jesus (see introductory notes to this chapter, § 4: for a parallel in an apocalyptic writing cf. Rev. xiii. 18).

the mountains. A natural place of refuge.

15–19. The urgency of the need for flight, the conditions which may aggravate its distress, and the fierceness of the tribulation itself, are portrayed in imaginative language.

20. The Divine mercy intervenes, **for the elect's sake**; else all must perish. The past tense regards a future event as already accomplished in the Divine purpose.

21–23. A return to the theme of vers. 5, 6, with greater detail: cf. 2 Thess. ii. 3–12; 1 John ii. 18.

24–27. The consummation to which all that goes before has led up. This event is **the coming of the Son of man,** described in language borrowed from Daniel (cf. xv. 62), and attended by portents in the heavens. His coming is not to be separated from the events described in the preceding section: it takes place **in those days, after** (Matthew adds "immediately") **that tribulation.** The details of the description are, of course, not to be taken literally: they are the attempt of poetic imagery to realise what it means that God should intervene in human history (cf. Ps. xviii. 6–17). If the prophecy of the "coming of the Son of man" found fulfilment in Pentecost (see introductory notes, § 5), it is to be noted that Peter applies to the gift of the Holy Spirit a very similar prophecy of Joel (Acts ii. 19, 20); if (as the sequence here suggests) in the destruction of Jerusalem, then the O.T. furnishes parallels of like word-painting used of lesser events (Isa. xiii. 9, 10, 13, of the destruction of Babylon; Isa. xxxiv. 4, 5, of the judgment on Edom).

27. The "salvation" of vers. 13, 20. Luke substitutes "Look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh."

28. R.V., "her parable . . . is now become tender."

ye know. Pronoun unemphatic: it is a gracious sign which everybody can read.

29. R.V., "even so . . . know ye." Emphatic: ye disciples who have been warned to look out for these "signs of the times."

it is nigh, viz. the consummation just described. Luke has "the kingdom of God."

30. These words have been variously interpreted

to allow the supposition that part of the prophecy —the coming of the Son of man—still awaits fulfilment. They can only mean that the whole was to fall *within that generation.*

31. In spite of all delay and doubt ("Where is the promise of his coming?" 2 Pet. iii. 4), His word remains irrevocably sure.

32. A real ignorance, belonging to the human limitations of Jesus; cf. Acts i. 7.

33. The discourse closes with reiterated injunction to **watchfulness,** an ever present duty not dependent at all on knowledge of "times or seasons." At this point, in illustration of this duty, each of the Synoptics goes its own way. Matthew appends the Parables of the Ten Virgins and The Talents, with other matter.

34. The disciple is trustee for his absent Lord.

35. Names for the four watches of the night: 6–9, 9–12, 12–3, 3–6.

Mark xiv. 1, 2; cf. Matt. xxvi. 1–5=Luke xxii. 1, 2.

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE PRIESTS.

After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to
2 death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

1. It is the whole seven days' festival which is here spoken of under its two names, derived from the meal which opened it and the ritual avoidance

of leaven while it continued; see Ex. xii. This is the earliest mention of the **Passover** in the Synoptics (except in Luke's story of the boyhood of Jesus, ii. 41) and the first indication that Jesus had come to Jerusalem at the feast-time.

2. The purpose of xi. 18, xii. 12, was now taking shape in definite plans for the arrest of Jesus.

But. R.V., "for." An *explanation* of the **sought how,** and of the need for **craft.**

Not on the feast day. Rather, "Not during the feast" (R.V.). A counsel of prudence, postponing action till the festival was over and Jerusalem empty. The treachery of Judas gave them an unlooked-for opportunity, and enabled them to effect the arrest quietly on the very evening of the Paschal meal.

Mark xiv. 3-9; cf. Matt. xxvi. 6-13; John xii. 1-8 (Luke vii. 36-50).

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY.

3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as
he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster
box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake
4 the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some
that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was
5 this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been
sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been
6 given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And
Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath
7 wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with
you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good:
8 but me ye have not always. She hath done what she
could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the

9 burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

If the note of time in ver. 1 applies, as seems probable, to this incident and its sequel (vers. 10, 11), the anointing at Bethany is placed on the *Wednesday* of the last week. For by "after two days" Mark should mean "on the morrow," just as by "after three days" (viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 34) he clearly intends "on the third day," *i.e.* the next day but one. On the *Thursday* evening (ver. 17) Jesus and His disciples ate their Paschal meal, and on *Friday* He was crucified.

(The Fourth Gospel places this incident "six days before the Passover" (John xii. 1) and before the Triumphal Entry. It is generally supposed that this is an intentional correction, from knowledge, of the Synoptic record; we have no data to enable us to say with certainty which is right. As placed here, the picture of a woman's loving homage makes a beautiful contrast to the hastening tragedy; this *may* be the reason for its displacement.)

3. **Simon the leper.** Not otherwise known, but perhaps one of the lepers cleansed by Jesus (Matt. xi. 5). Luke (who omits this incident) tells of an earlier anointing, also in the house of one Simon, a Pharisee, by a woman who was a "sinner" (Luke vii. 36–50). The circumstances are very different, and the name Simon is common. Another supposed link of connection is in the name of the woman. The Fourth Gospel tells us that it was Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus,

who anointed Jesus at Bethany; the Lukan incident is followed by the mention of certain women who ministered to Jesus of their substance, one of them being Mary Magdalene "from whom seven devils had gone out" (Luke viii. 2). This phrase and the proximity of mention are the only grounds for the traditional identification of Mary Magdalene with the woman who was a "sinner," and there is still less reason for identifying Mary of Bethany with either.

spikenard. The Greek is *pistic nard*. Nard is a fragrant oil from an Indian plant; the adjective is of doubtful meaning (see R.V. marg.), *genuine* being perhaps most likely. "Spikenard," *i.e.* spiked nard, supposed to refer to the spike-like shoots of the plant, is taken from the Vulgate *nardi spicati*, probably a guess suggested by similarity of sound with the unknown Greek word.

The perfuming of the hair was one of the usual preliminaries to a meal (see Luke vii. 44–46); the point is the lavish use (John says "a pound") of costliest ointment. John adds details which seem to come from the earlier narrative of Luke (John xii. 3).

4. **some.** Matthew, "the disciples"; John, "Judas Iscariot."

Why. R.V., "To what purpose."

waste. The verdict of minds which could see no "utility" in this impulsive outgoing of sympathy and love.

> "With murmur and nod, they called it waste:
> Their love they could endure;
> Her's ached, a prisoner in her breast,
> And she forgot the poor."
>
> GEORGE MACDONALD.

6. Jesus rebukes the *interference*. Who were they that they should take upon themselves to judge? And their judgment of "utility" was all wrong: it was **a good work.**

7. *Good*, because she instinctively saw a need and an opportunity, in the lonely sorrow of the Master, which would never recur.

8. *Good*, because she followed the uncalculating impulse to do the best in her power. Such impulses have a way of meeting needs in unexpected fashion. This one chimed in with the sad thoughts of Jesus and brought just the comfort and strength He craved.

9. R.V., "the gospel." Jesus assumes that the gospel to be preached after His death will centre in the facts and teachings of His own ministry (see n. on i. 1). It will go out into all the world, and this story will go with it; that is His *interpretation* of the intrinsic worth and beauty of a simple deed. He, whose word was truth, did not magnify it; He judged it, and declared it for what it was. And the moral is that we learn to adjust, so far as we may, our standard of values to His.

Mark xiv. 10, 11; cf. Matt. xxvi. 14–16= Luke xxii. 3–6.

THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS.

10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief
11 priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

10. **Judas Iscariot.** See n. on iii. 19, and cf. ver. 43. There seems to be no connection between

this action of Judas and the anointing, except that they were events of the same day. It is true that John singles out Judas as especially angry with the woman, but he gives no hint that this determined the treachery. Judas himself is an enigma, and very various motives have been assigned to his deed. "If he had not at first believed in Jesus, and if he had not given evidence of his zeal for the gospel, he would never have been admitted into the number of the Twelve. . . . But Judas proved refractory to the education which the Saviour gave to His disciples: he did not understand why Jesus ran the risk of death, and when he saw, doubtless before the other disciples, absorbed in their faith, the growing peril which gathered round Him who claimed to be the Christ, he felt all his hopes crumble: Jesus was not the Messiah of whom he had dreamed, the triumphant King who beats down His enemies, who distributes honours and riches to His friends. His treacherous act would extricate him, he thought, from a false situation. It does not seem that Judas, any more than the judges and the executioners of Jesus, fully realised his crime" (Loisy).

11. In what we may hope is the less original account of Matthew, he "bargained" for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave! The *motive* of avarice is not here emphasised.

Mark xiv. 12–16; cf. Matt. xxvi. 17–19= Luke xxii. 7–13.

PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER.

12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt

thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the
13 passover? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples,
and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall
meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.
14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman
of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-
chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?
15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and
16 prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples
went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had
said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

12. The date is the 14th Nisan, on the afternoon of which day the lambs were slain for the Passover meal observed the same evening, that is, after the 15th Nisan had begun. It is perfectly clear from this account (with which Matthew and Luke agree) that *the Last Supper was the Passover* (vers. 12, 14, 16), and that, in consequence, Jesus was crucified on the 15th Nisan. (The Fourth Gospel alters this to the 14th, so that the Last Supper would be an *anticipation* of the Paschal meal: see John xiii. 1, xviii. 28, xix. 14, 31.)

13. The arrangements may well have been made beforehand, and the signal, in the need for secrecy, agreed upon. Jesus could be cautious till His hour was come; cf. Luke xxii. 15.

14. **The Master.** The owner of the house was evidently a disciple. It is an interesting conjecture that he was the father of Mark himself, perhaps also the owner of the garden of Gethsemane. This is based upon the fact that "the house of Mary the mother of Mark" was afterwards a Christian centre in Jerusalem (Acts

xii. 12). A further detail in this interpretation of scattered hints is that the "young man" of ver. 51 was Mark, the son of the house, roused perhaps from sleep by the arrival of the multitude in search of Jesus after He and the disciples had left for Gethsemane, and following hurriedly, clad only in a covering snatched from his bed, to see the end. See n. on ver. 51.

Mark xiv. 17–26; cf. Matt. xxvi. 20–30; Luke xxii. 14–30; John xiii. 21–30.

THE LAST SUPPER.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. And
18 as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you,
19 one of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And
they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by
20 one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? And he answered
and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth
21 with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it
is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son
of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had
22 never been born. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread,
and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said,
23 Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when
he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all
24 drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood
25 of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily
I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the
vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of
26 God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out
into the mount of Olives.

18. **as they were eating.** Again in ver. 22. The progress of the Paschal meal was interrupted

by two memorable incidents, the prediction of the betrayal and the Institution of the "Lord's Supper."

19. A pained and bewildered question, **Surely not I?**

20. **dippeth,** etc. Morsels of the unleavened cakes were dipped into a kind of sauce (*charoseth*). This simply repeats the assertion of ver. 18, "one of you which eateth with me," and does not give any clearer indication of who the traitor is. The sting of the treachery is that it is the act of a friend. It is probable that the words of Ps. xli. 9 were in our Lord's mind (cf. John xiii. 18). Matthew and John are different (Matt. xxvi. 25; John xiii. 26).

21. **goeth.** Through the gateway of death. Jesus was sure this was the Divine will (cf. viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 33) and also that it was **written** in the O.T. Scriptures. Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant of Jehovah was doubtless in His thoughts (cf. Acts viii. 32; 1 Pet. ii. 21–25).

woe. Cf. ix. 42; not vindictive, but declaratory of inevitable retribution.

22. During the meal (there is no stress at all on the Passover ritual) He took one of the small round cakes, offered thanks to God as the Giver, broke it and gave a piece to each disciple, adding the mystic words, "Take ye: this is my body" (R.V.).

23, 24. "And he took a cup" (R.V.), offered thanks, and passed it round; then, when all had drunk, declared, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many" (R.V.).

It is not possible here to enter into the questions raised by a comparison between this account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper and those given by Matthew and, especially, by Luke and Paul

(1 Cor. xi.). The *simplicity* of Mark's record will be noted. Jesus had spoken of His betrayal; now, in double symbol, He tells how freely He goes to death for the sake of those for whom He dies. The stress is on the *giving* of His life and on the *appropriation* of the gift by the disciples. Of interpretation there is little more than in the saying of x. 45 (see note): the benefits conferred on "many" by His death, likened then to a "ransom," are now those of a "covenant," ratified by blood (cf. Ex. xxiv. 6–8). "Christ regards His death as a sacrifice by which the new conditions of life in the kingdom He came to set up are to be introduced" (Menzies).

25. At once a solemn assertion that this is His last earthly meal and an assurance of the heavenly banquet (see n. on x. 37).

the fruit of the vine. A reminiscence of the opening benediction of the Paschal meal, "Blessed be God who hath created the fruit of the vine."

new refers to the new conditions of communion in the kingdom.

26. **hymn.** The last part of the Hallel which was chanted at stated points of the Paschal ritual. The contents cannot be exactly determined, but it comprised Psalms cxv.–cxviii., and possibly cxiii., cxiv., cxx.–cxxxvi. Whether it closed with Ps. cxviii. or Ps. cxxxvi., the last words of Jesus and His disciples, before they went out into the night, were words of praise: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

Mark xiv. 27–31 ; cf. Matt. xxvi. 31–35 (Luke xxii. 31–38 ; John xiii. 36–38).

ON THE WAY TO GETHSEMANE.

27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended
because of me this night: for it is written, *I will smite the*
28 *shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* But after
29 that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But
Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet
30 will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto
thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock
31 crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spake the
more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not
deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

27. The *stumbling* would come from lack of courage, not of faith. The quotation is from Zech. xiii. 7, freely applied: it is interesting to note that the previous verse of the prophecy speaks of being "wounded in the house of my friends" (cf. n. on ver. 20).

28. Cf. Matt. xxviii. 10. The precise prediction is not natural here, and disturbs the connection between ver. 27 and ver. 29.

30. **twice.** Peculiar to Mark, possibly in reference to the *beginning* and the *end* of the "cock-crow" watch (midnight to 3 a.m., xiii. 35). But so precise a prediction has something artificial about it, whereas "before cock-crow" is quite natural. Some authorities omit "twice": see notes on vers. 68, 72.

Compare the versions of this conversation in Luke xxii. 31–34 and John xiii. 36–38.

Mark xiv. 32–42; cf. Matt. xxvi. 36–46; Luke xxii. 39–46.

GETHSEMANE.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.
33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and
34 began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto
35 death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were
36 possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what
37 thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou
38 watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.
39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same
40 words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what
41 to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into
42 the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

32. The **place** was on the Mount of Olives (ver. 26). Luke, who does not give the name, seems to suggest that it was here that Jesus had "lodged" night by night during this last week (cf. Luke xxii. 39 with xxi. 37; see n. on xi. 11). This would explain how it was that Judas "knew the place" (John xviii. 2), and partly account for the sleep of the disciples.

Gethsemane. Lit. "oil-press." Perhaps a plantation (John calls it "a garden") of olive trees, with apparatus for extracting the oil. Jesus entered the walled enclosure with the chosen three (cf. v. 37, ix. 2), leaving the others at the entrance until He should have prayed (see n. on i. 35).

33. The distress of Jesus was very manifest to the three, and is frankly recorded. There was an element of **amazement** in it (see n. on i. 27). "His first feeling was one of terrified surprise. Long as He had foreseen the Passion, when it came clearly into view its terrors exceeded His anticipations" (Swete). Luke omits this and greatly abbreviates the narrative (the two verses Luke xxii. 43, 44, are of doubtful authenticity).

34. **My soul is exceeding sorrowful.** The phrase is from Ps. xlii. 5, 11, xliii. 5, and must have carried with it in our Lord's thoughts the Psalmist's next words, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him." But *this* sorrow was **unto death.**

tarry ye here and watch. Jesus must bear His sorrow alone and overcome it by prayer; but it will be a support to feel that His friends are near and watching "with him" (Matthew).

35. The words of the prayer vary in the accounts: its substance is one and the same. It is intensely real, and its significance is not to be accommodated to any presuppositions. The Synoptists tell us, apparently on the testimony of those who were with Him in the garden, that Jesus threw His whole soul into the supplication that even now His Father would *save him from death*, but only **if it were possible.** It was not, and the prayer found its answer in the strength that enabled Jesus

to say out of His exceeding sorrow, **Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt** (see n. on ver. 41).

36. **Abba.** *I.e.*, "Father," the Aramaic word spoken by Jesus (cf. v. 41, vii. 34). The Greek word for Father cannot be added as an interpretation (which would be quite inappropriate in fervent prayer): it would seem that *Abba* became a hallowed formula of invocation, used even by Greek-speaking Jews as a sort of proper name for God, to which the title **Father** could be added without redundancy (only here and Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6).

cup. See n. on x. 38.

37. The reproach is addressed to Peter, but in Matthew the verb is plural, "Could *ye* not watch?" The sleep at such a crisis is a psychological problem: the fidelity with which the record tells how the disciples failed their Lord in His sore need is striking.

38. They had failed Him, but His concern is for them. Eager souls they were (ver. 31), loyal and loving, but the **flesh** (did He not know it?) shrinks from danger and death. Taken unawares, they might be surprised into cowardice before the forces of the **spirit** had time to rally and assert themselves. Let them be on the alert, with mind and heart ever turned in a *habit* of prayer to the strength which is with God. What the **temptation** meant is seen at ver. 50.

40. Cf. ix. 6: they were helpless, but without excuse.

41. **Sleep on now.** The words are hardly ironical (even with "a lofty and profound irony," Chadwick), but rather mean that the need of ver. 34 is past and the victory won.

it is enough. The Greek word is of doubtful interpretation, but "it marks the closing of the scene just narrated, with its awful tension. The former situation is dismissed, and the new one accepted" (Menzies). And it would seem that even as He speaks He becomes aware of the approach of those who had come to arrest Him. The words with which He calmly accepts so bitter a fate reflect the agony as well as the triumph of Gethsemane. **The Son of man,** the Messiah, **betrayed** by His friend **into the hands of sinners,** those who had, with malignant hatred, refused and resisted Him! "This utterance makes it clear that the struggle of Gethsemane did not arise out of Jesus' apprehension of personal pain and reproach, but was largely Messianic" (Menzies).

42. Rise from the ground and let us go worthily to meet our destiny.

Mark xiv. 43–52; cf. Matt. xxvi. 47–56 = Luke xxii. 47–53 (John xviii. 1–11).

THE ARREST OF JESUS.

43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one
of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords
and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the
44 elders. And he that betrayed him had given them a token,
saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take
45 him, and lead him away safely. And as soon as he was
come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master,
46 Master; and kissed him. And they laid their hands on
47 him, and took him. And one of them that stood by drew
a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut

48 off his ear. And Jesus answered and said unto them,
Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with
49 staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple
teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be
50 fulfilled. And they all forsook him, and fled. And there
51 followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth
cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold
52 on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them
naked.

43. The description suggests a *rabble,* led by **Judas** and **servants of the high priest** (ver. 47). The Roman authorities have no part in the arrest (John is different), and it is doubtful whether it was even an official act of the Sanhedrin. The priests acted first and got their sanction afterwards.

44. Jesus would not be known to all, and it was dark.

45. **Master, master.** R.V. simply, "Rabbi." In Matthew "Hail, Rabbi"; in Luke no word of greeting.

kissed. The word used is intensive, "kissed him effusively." This, and the general Scripture usage of the kiss, make it probable that this was not the disciple's kissing of his teacher's *hand* in token of respect, but a kiss of affection upon the cheek.

46. Jesus makes no reply to Judas; cf. Matt. xxvi. 50 (R.V.) and Luke xxii. 48.

47. This incident is related without sequel: in the other accounts the act is rebuked by Jesus. Luke alone says that He healed the ear.

48. Jesus makes indignant protest against the manner of His arrest. It could only be in His teaching that He had offended, and as a teacher He should have been quietly taken; instead, He is seized with the violence used against a dangerous bandit and outlaw.

49. **the scriptures.** Cf. ver. 21. In Luke's narrative (xxii. 37) Jesus had already applied to Himself the words of Isa. liii. 12, "And he was numbered with the transgressors."

50. This tragic desertion is the last word of this Gospel about the disciples, with the exception of Peter, "who followed afar off" (ver. 54).

51. Cf. Amos ii. 16. "Every possible hypothesis has been put forward on the subject of this mysterious individual" (Loisy). The incident is peculiar to this Gospel. It may be a chance reminiscence of some eye-witness which has come to Mark's knowledge and which he inserts, trivial though it be, to heighten his picture of Jesus abandoned to His foes. Or the young man may have been Mark himself (see n. on ver. 14), who chooses this way of leaving his "signature in a dark corner of his picture."

Mark xiv. 53–65; cf. Matt. xxvi. 57–68; Luke xxii. 54, 55, 63–65 (xxii. 66–71).

THE TRIAL BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him
were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the
54 scribes. And Peter followed him afar off, even into the
palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and
55 warmed himself at the fire. And the chief priests and all
the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to
56 death; and found none. For many bare false witness
57 against him, but their witness agreed not together. And
there arose certain, and bare false witness against him,
58 saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple
that is made with hands, and within three days I will
59 build another made without hands. But neither so did

60 their witness agree together. And the high priest stood
up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou
nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?
61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the
high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the
62 Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am:
and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand
63 of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the
high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we
64 any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy:
what think ye? And they all condemned him to be
65 guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to
cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him,
Prophesy: and the servants did strike him with the palms
of their hands.

According to Mark, there were three stages in the trial of Jesus: (1) before the Sanhedrin, presided over by the High Priest, in the night; (2) a consultation of the Sanhedrin early in the morning, apparently to formulate their accusations; mentioned only, with no details; (3) before Pilate. So Matthew. Luke has no account of the night trial, but gives details of a trial in the morning: he alone tells that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is first taken before Annas and examined, then sent to Caiaphas (no details), and by him handed over to Pilate. These differences, with other difficulties of detail, make it impossible to reconstruct the trial of Jesus with certainty; it must be sufficient here to follow the plain narrative of Mark.

53. **the high priest.** Caiaphas, named in Matthew. This irregular night assembly of the Sanhedrin would not meet in its Hall in the Temple buildings.

54. **palace.** Rather, "court" (R.V.), the open space round which the palace was built. The trial was in an upper room (ver. 66). This verse is in preparation for verses 66–72.

55. There must be some observance of legal forms. But it is not usual for judges to "seek" for witness in order to condemn!

56. Plenty of accusations, not specified, but there had been no time to arrange that two or three witnesses should say the same thing (Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15).

58. This is **false witness** in the sense of perverting words actually spoken. There is evidence of some such utterance by Jesus in the charge brought against Stephen and in his defence (Acts vi. 14, vii. 48), while in the Fourth Gospel there is record of a very similar saying (John ii. 19). The nearest equivalent in the Synoptics is the prediction of the destruction of the Temple (xiii. 2). Perhaps this had been distorted, or possibly the prediction itself gives in modified form some still bolder utterance.

59. Matthew omits this.

60. An attempt to get over the legal obstacle to condemnation, presented by the discrepant evidence, by inducing the accused to incriminate himself.

61. There was nothing to answer till legal evidence had been given against Him. The silence is a dignified protest against the shameless illegality of the whole proceedings. At this point the attempt to convict Him on some side issue which would turn the tide of popular feeling against Him is abandoned as hopeless, and a leading question is put to which He cannot remain silent without in

effect disavowing the claim He had tacitly made. In Matthew the High Priest puts Jesus on His oath.

the Son of the Blessed. That the Messiah was to be Son of God, in the official sense (see n. on i. 11), was part of the current Messianic belief. "The Blessed," a Jewish paraphrase for "God" (Matthew).

62. The first open avowal of Messiahship by Jesus, made more emphatic by the bold appropriation of Daniel's prophecy (see notes on i. 11, ii. 10).

63. **rent his clothes.** The sign of grief (Gen. xxxvii. 39), forbidden to the High Priest in private sorrows (Lev. x. 6, xxi. 10), but prescribed by custom as an expression of horror on hearing blasphemy. A seam of convenient length was provided for the legal "rending."

64. There was no **blasphemy** in the claim as advanced except (and hardly then) on the presupposition that it could not be true (for the law of blasphemy cf. Lev. xxiv. 10–23; 1 Kings xxi. 9–13).

guilty of, *i.e.* liable to, **death** (by stoning), a sentence which under Roman law the Jewish authorities had no power to carry into effect (John xviii. 31: see Schürer, *Jewish People*, div. ii. vol. i. p. 187. The execution of Stephen (Acts vii. 59) was "an act of irregular mob-justice").

65. Some of the judges, perhaps also the baffled witnesses, give full rein to their malice by heaping every foul and cruel insult upon the condemned prisoner. Finally the officers of the Sanhedrin "received him" (R.V.), took Him over for safe keeping, "with blows of their hands."

Prophesy. According to Luke, Jesus, blindfolded, is asked to prophesy who it was who struck Him.

Mark xiv. 66–72; cf. Matt. xxvi. 67–75=Luke xxii. 55–62 (John xviii. 15–18, 25–27).

PETER'S DENIAL.

66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one
67 of the maids of the high priest: and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And
68 thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock
69 crew. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to
70 them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a
71 Galilæan, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of
72 whom ye speak. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

The narrative returns to ver. 54. It should be remembered that Peter was the only one of the Twelve who had turned back from the hasty flight of ver. 50, and that to be near his Master he had ventured into a position of manifest peril. "He had been prepared to fight for Him, but saw no wisdom in uselessly suffering with Him. The incident was a humiliating one for Peter; but if it had not been for his previous braggart promises, was not so disgraceful as we are apt to think it" (Salmon).

The four accounts agree in a threefold denial, but differ in details.

66. **palace.** R.V., "court." Cf. ver. 54. Peter was conspicuous "in the light of the fire" (ver. 54).

67. R.V., "with the Nazarene, even Jesus." Cf. i. 24.

68. The disclaimer is rather overdone. Peter retires into safer quarters in the shadow of the **porch** or covered way leading from the court into the street.

and the cock crew. R.V. omits; probably an insertion to harmonise with vers. 30, 72.

69. "Another maid," according to Matthew and Luke.

70. **and thy speech agreeth thereto.** R.V. omits; from Matt. xxvi. 73, "for thy speech bewrayeth thee." It is not likely that he would speak more than was necessary to answer questions.

71. Peter did not break out into profanities, but, invoking against himself the Divine *curse* (Anathema) if he spoke falsely, he *swore* that he had no knowledge of Jesus. The first lie has grown in substance and in vehemence.

72. Some authorities omit **the second time** and **twice.** Peter's own protestation, made with exceeding vehemence, "If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee," and his Master's estimate of his courage flash upon his mind. Luke adds that "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." Matthew and Luke have "And he went out and wept bitterly." Mark's word rendered **when he thought thereon** is of doubtful meaning. R.V. agrees with A.V., with margin, "he began to weep."

It would seem probable that, as he had risked so much to remain near Jesus, and had paid so dearly in honour, he would linger in Jerusalem to witness the terrible events of this day now

beginning to dawn. But we do not know: this Gospel has nothing further to say of Peter.

Mark xv. 1; cf. Matt. xxvii. 1, ■ (Luke xxii. 66–xxiii. 1).

JESUS DELIVERED TO PILATE.

1 And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

1. This is not a mere formal meeting of the Sanhedrin to regularise the proceedings of the night: the object is to determine what accusation they shall bring against Jesus before Pilate, and to do this with the urgent haste which the danger of ■ popular disturbance at feast-time demanded. It is evident that the Roman authority would not simply confirm their sentence. They must devise an offence against Roman law, and they do this by insisting on the *political* aspect of that claim to Messiahship which they had condemned on *religious* grounds as blasphemy.

Pilate. The Roman Procurator of Judæa from 26–36 A.D. His official residence was at Cæsarea, but at the Passover it was necessary that he should be in Jerusalem, as responsible for order.

Mark xv. 2–15; cf. Matt. xxvii. 11–26; Luke xxiii. 2–25; John xviii. 28–xix. 16.

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews?
3 And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it. And
the chief priests accused him of many things: but he
4 answered nothing. And Pilate asked him again, saying,
Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they
5 witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing;
6 so that Pilate marvelled. Now at that feast he released
7 unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And
there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with
them that had made insurrection with him, who had
8 committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude
crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever
9 done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying,
Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?
10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for
11 envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he
12 should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate
answered and said again unto them, What will ye then
that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of
13 the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him.
14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done?
And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.
15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released
Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had
scourged him, to be crucified.

Mark's account of the trial before Pilate is only fragmentary. Matthew follows the same version, adding the two incidents of the dream of Pilate's wife and of Pilate washing his hands. Luke follows a record which sets the events in clearer

sequence, and tells of the sending to Herod, while John is very largely original. But all agree in fastening the real guilt of the murder of Jesus upon the Jews and not upon Pilate. Pilate, by comparison, stands for justice: lacking the moral courage to insist, he yet tries one plan after another to rescue the innocent prisoner, and only yields at last to popular clamour.

2. **Art thou.** The pronoun is emphatic, perhaps with a touch of incredulous contempt. This charge, carefully formulated by the Sanhedrin, refutes itself, so far as any menace to the State from such a "king" is concerned.

Thou sayest. A formula of assent; cf. Matt. xxvi. 64 with Mark xiv. 62, and see Luke xxii. 70, 71. Possibly the phrase assents with a certain reservation: King? yes, but not as men count kingship (cf. John xviii. 36, 37). In that case we may distinguish between the replies to the only two questions which Jesus answered during His Trials. "Art thou the Christ?" "I am." "Art thou (then) the King of the Jews?" Yes, He is that too, but the responsibility of interpreting the claim must lie with the questioners.

3. A vague statement that when the bare charge failed of its effect it was supported by **accusations** to which the representative of Rome was bound to give heed. Luke specifies "perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, stirring up the people."

4. As in xiv. 61, Jesus will not stoop to answer. He knows what the end must be, and, in silence, will let God have His way. Mark records no further word but the cry from the cross (ver. 34).

6. R.V., "at the feast he used to release."

Nothing is known of this custom except what the Evangelists relate, nor of Barabbas.

9. Pilate sees his opportunity to appeal, under sanction of this custom, from the hierarchy to the populace.

10. The "many accusations" have evidently left him convinced of the prisoner's innocence of any political offence: this prosecution is inspired by **envy** against one who had dared to traverse the authority of the religious leaders of Israel.

11. Mark's whole story would rather have led us to think that an appeal to the "multitude," so uniformly favourable to Jesus, would be the last thing the chief priests desired. So the Evangelist explains why it was not successful. Crowds are proverbially fickle, but this sudden alliance with the enemies of Jesus is a little surprising. The rage of men who felt themselves not only disappointed but cheated in their hopes explains much; and probably only a small part of this crowd knew anything about Jesus.

12. A jesting appeal in favour of the prisoner. If they were gratified by the release of Barabbas the worst of their feeling towards Jesus would surely be a contemptuous indifference, and Pilate could let Him go.

13. They have learnt their lesson from the priests too well.

14. A shocked protest from Pilate leads only to redoubled cries: the appeal to the multitude (ver. 9), instead of helping Jesus, proved fatal to Him.

15. The Synoptists represent Pilate, convinced that the charge is baseless and the prisoner innocent of any crime, as *sacrificing Jesus to the*

sheer clamour of the Jerusalem mob. Only John records the ominous threat to which at the last moment he yielded, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend."

Scourging was the usual preliminary to crucifixion.

Mark xv. 16–20; cf. Matt. xxvii. 27–31 (John xix. 1–5).

THE MOCKERY.

16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called
17 Prætorium; and they call together the whole band. And
they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of
18 thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute
19 him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the
head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their
20 knees worshipped him. And when they had mocked him,
they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes
on him, and led him out to crucify him.

After the trial before Caiaphas, Jesus had had to endure the insults of triumphant malice: now He is exposed to the rough play of the Roman soldiers, who find in His "kingship" an excellent jest.

16. Apparently into the **court** of Fort Antonia, where the garrison was lodged. The **band** or "cohort" numbered six hundred men.

17. **purple.** Matthew says "a scarlet cloak," probably a soldier's cloak made to serve for the royal colour.

The wreath of thorny brushwood would be painful, but its purpose was mockery, not torture.

19. **reed.** To represent the royal sceptre. Matthew explains that they put it in His hand, then took it away and struck Him with it.

Mark xv. 21–41; cf. Matt. xxvii. 32–56 (Luke xxiii. 26–49; John xix. 16–37).

THE CRUCIFIXION.

21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by,
coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and
22 Rufus, to bear his cross. And they bring him unto the
place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of
23 a skull. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with
24 myrrh: but he received it not. And when they had
crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon
25 them, what every man should take. And it was the third
26 hour, and they crucified him. And the superscription of
his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE
27 JEWS. And with him they crucify two thieves; the one
28 on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the
scripture was fulfilled, which saith, *And he was numbered*
29 *with the transgressors*. And they that passed by railed on
him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that
30 destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save
31 thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the
chief priests mocking said among themselves with the
32 scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let
Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that
we may see and believe. And they that were crucified
33 with him reviled him. And when the sixth hour was
come, there was darkness over the whole land until the
34 ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud
voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is,
being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou
35 forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when
36 they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. And one
ran and filled a spunge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed,
and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see
37 whether Elias will come to take him down. And Jesus

38 cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the
veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the
39 bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over
against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the
ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.
40 There were also women looking on afar off: among
whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of
41 James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (who also,
when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered
unto him;) and many other women which came up with
him unto Jerusalem.

21. **compel.** Lit. "impress," a touch of military arrogance. It would appear that Jesus was too far spent to carry, as criminals did, His own cross. Each Synoptist gives the name of this African Jew: Mark alone mentions his sons, evidently well known in the Christian community for which he is writing. They cannot be identified. Did this incident win Simon for Christ, and his sons after him?

22. **Golgotha.** Aramaic for "skull," probably some bald rounded hill near the city (Loisy compares the name of the French town Chaumont, "bald hill"). Luke has "unto the place which is called The skull" (R.V.), where the A.V., from the Latin Vulgate, has "which is called Calvary." That sacred name has disappeared from R.V. text.

23. A stupefying draught, offered in mercy. "Jesus refuses this alleviation: He fears neither pain nor death, and chooses to experience to the very end the bitterness of His sacrifice" (Loisy). Matthew alters this to an act of cruel mockery, wine mingled with bitter gall, which Jesus tasted and rejected: doubtless a reminiscence and supposed fulfilment of Ps. lxix. 21 (see ver. 36).

24. The clothes were the perquisite of the four (John xix. 23) executioners. This detail is no doubt mentioned as fulfilling a Scripture which John alone cites (Ps. xxii. 18).

25. **the third hour.** 9 a.m. Mark only. This cannot be reconciled with John xix. 14.

26. A legal formality. The exact form of the inscription varies in each of the four accounts; the substance is identical.

27. **two thieves.** R.V., "two robbers," desperadoes like Barabbas. An accentuation of the shameful circumstances of the Saviour's death. All mention this: Luke alone has the story of the "penitent thief."

28. R.V. omits: an interpolation from Luke xxii. 37.

29–32. A picture in three panels of the **scoffs and reproaches** which were heaped upon this crucified "Messiah." The **passers by** (the cross must have stood near a public road), who had heard of the proud boast alleged by the witnesses before Caiaphas (xiv. 58), bid Him prove His title to use such brave words. **The authors of his death** are there to see their work, and, not addressing Him, argue beneath the cross in exultant justification of what they have done. **He saved others,** a jeering reference either to His reported miracles of healing (of which this word "save" is repeatedly used, see v. 23, 34, x. 52) or to His "Messianic pretensions, understood as a work of universal salvation" (Loisy): this latter meaning is rather suggested by what follows. **Himself he cannot save,** the unconscious utterance of the truth which created Christianity. **The robbers** joined in the reproaches, as if they too

were cheated of deliverance by the failure of this Messianic hope (but cf. Luke xxiii. 39–43).

33. The first indication that this execution was not as others. Each Synoptist (not John) records the two portents, a **three hours' darkness** (noon to 3 p.m.) **over the whole earth** (so R.V. rightly), and **the rending of the temple veil.** Matthew amplifies with matter of more legendary aspect.

To seek a natural cause for the darkness is to offend against the spirit of the narrative. Mark intends a supernatural portent of mourning and desolation, the very sun hiding his face before such a deed. Luke uses a technical word, "The sun's light *failing*," which might be interpreted of an eclipse; but Luke would know that an eclipse could not occur at the Passover full moon, and could not last three hours (cf. Amos viii. 9, 10).

34. **Elŏi** is the Aramaic form for the Hebrew "Eli," which Matthew retains, and which better accounts for the confusion, real or pretended, with Elijah. Reverence will shrink from a too confident assertion that this cry meant, for the consciousness of Jesus, a sense of real abandonment by God. The words are the opening question of Psalm xxii., the cry of one delivered over to his persecutors, despairing but for his faith in God, whose help tarries. So interpreted here, "it falls in with the prayer in Gethsemane, 'Remove this cup from me,' and becomes a question, while the cup is at His lips, why it was not removed" (Gould). Moreover, it is a natural inference from the citation of its opening words, that the whole psalm had been in our Lord's thoughts during those hours of agony. But the psalm is not one of despair: on the contrary, it ends with the triumph of faith and a

vision of the universal kingdom of God. It is at least possible, therefore, that the cry is a cry of victory in the very moment of the approach of death.

This is the only one of the "Seven Words from the Cross" given by Mark and Matthew (not Luke). Of the rest, three are peculiar to Luke (but see R.V. marg., Luke xxiii. 34), three to John.

35. **Elijah** held prominent place in Jewish thought as precursor of Messiah (vi. 15, viii. 28, ix. 11–13) and as a deliverer in time of trouble. Perhaps the Roman soldiers knew enough about this to misunderstand the cry: if the reference is to Jewish bystanders, the misunderstanding could only be a pretence and a mockery.

36. **vinegar.** Perhaps the *posca*, or sour wine which the soldiers drank, kept in a vessel with a sponge for stopper (a reminiscence of Ps. lxix. 21 seems probable; cf. ver. 23). Some one takes advantage of the diversion to do an act of mercy, putting interference aside on the plea of keeping life in Jesus till it became clear whether Elijah was coming or not. In Matthew it is the lookers-on who say "Let be": they prevent the act of mercy, saying in effect, "Give him no help: leave him to Elijah."

37. Luke gives words to this last **cry**: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

gave up the ghost. Lit. "breathed out," breathed His last, expired.

38. **the veil** which shut off the Holy of Holies (entered only by the High Priest once a year) from the Holy Place. The effect of the death of Christ to Christian thought is that the believer has free access to God (Rom. v.; Eph. ii. 14–18, iii. 12;

Heb. vi. 19, 20, ix. 3–14, x. 19, 20). See n. on ver. 33.

39. R.V., "saw that he so gave up the ghost." The "so" seems to attach to the whole manner of the death, rather than exclusively to the darkness. In Matthew the reference is to the accompanying portents: so perhaps in Luke, "saw what was done."

the Son of God. This phrase could not be used by a heathen centurion in the sense it would convey to the Evangelist and his readers (unless, indeed, he knew by hearsay of a claim he could not understand, and declares that, whatever this man claimed to be, the claim is true). Probably the confession of the centurion (Luke has "this was a righteous (*i.e.* innocent) man") has been translated into Christian terms. If (with R.V. marg.) we render "a son of God," the phrase means a divine being, hero, demigod, and is a confession a Gentile might make. But it is doubtful if the Evangelists so understood it.

40. This mention of the **women** prepares for ver. 47 and xvi. 1–8.

Mary of Magdala. See n. on xiv. 3.

James "the Little." Usually identified with the Apostle James, son of Alphæus: perhaps the epithet was used to distinguish him from the greater Apostle James, son of Zebedee.

Salome. Probably mother of James and John, sons of Zebedee (cf. Matt. xxvii. 56).

41. Cf. Luke viii. 2, 3.

Mark xv. 42–47; cf. Matt. xxvii. 57–61 = Luke xxiii. 50–56 (John xix. 38–42).

THE BURIAL.

42 And now when the even was come, because it was the
43 Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly
44 unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any
45 while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he
46 gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and
47 rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

Jewish law, probably conformed to by the Roman authorities, forbade that the body should remain upon the cross all night (Deut. xxi. 23). In this instance there was additional reason for hasty burial; it was already 3 p.m. on Friday, and the Sabbath began at sunset. Unless some relative or friend made successful application, the corpse would be flung into the common grave of criminals. None of His immediate circle make this petition for the body of Jesus: perhaps they dare not, but the need finds an unexpected and influential friend.

42. **even.** Any time between 3 p.m. and sunset.

43. **Arimathæa.** Perhaps the Ramathaim of 1 Sam. i. 1 in Ephraim, or the town of the same name near Lydda (1 Macc. xi. 34). He was a

councillor, *i.e.* member of the Sanhedrin, **of good position** (Matthew says "a rich man"), **who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God.** This phrase seems to characterise the devout Israelite (cf. Luke ii. 25 and xxiii. 50, 51) with a sympathetic admiration for the aims and ideals of Jesus which had not gone the length of discipleship. Matthew and John say he was a disciple, John adding, "but secretly, for fear of the Jews." Luke parenthetically remarks that he had not been a consenting party to the condemnation of Jesus.

44, 45. Peculiar to Mark. Crucifixion often meant a lingering death of two or three days. These verses give a guarantee of the actual death of Jesus.

gave the body. R.V., "granted the corpse." Lit. "gave as a boon," without payment, a detail to the credit of Pilate.

46. **sepulchre.** R.V., "tomb." Luke says "where never man had yet lain"; Matthew, "his own new tomb." See n. on xi. 2. No time for the use of aromatic spices: that must wait till the Sabbath was past.

47. This verse prepares for the next scene.

Mark xvi. 1–8; cf. Matt. xxviii. 1–8 = Luke xxiv. 1–9 (John xx. 1).

THE RESURRECTION.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet
2 spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came
3 unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said

among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from
4 the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they
saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.
5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man
sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment;
6 and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be
not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was
crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place
7 where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples
and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there
8 shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went
out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled
and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man;
for they were afraid.

1. In each account it is the women who discover the empty tomb, Mary of Magdala being especially prominent (in John, alone).

had bought. R.V., "bought," after sunset on the Sabbath.

2. **at the rising of the sun.** R.V., "when the sun was risen."

3. **they said.** R.V., "were saying," as they went. "A striking example of the way in which people often distress themselves by anticipation of difficulties which in point of fact never arise" (Salmon). They knew nothing of any watch set over the tomb (Matt. xxvii. 62–66).

4. The last clause explains why they were troubled about the stone.

5. This angelic appearance is related with considerable reserve: otherwise in Matthew.

affrighted. R.V., "amazed" (also in ver. 6).

6. **Jesus the Nazarene.** Cf. i. 24.

R.V., "which hath been crucified." The tense

used (the perfect) does not simply refer to the *fact* which took place two days ago ("which *was* crucified"), but describes a permanent *attribute*, as it were, of Jesus, and so reflects later Christian thought which had come to know the meaning of the Cross (cf. 1 Cor. i. 23, ii. 2).

he is risen. A tremendous word: the reader has been prepared for it (viii. 31, ix. 9, 31, x. 34, xiv. 28), but not these women nor the disciples. The tomb was obviously empty (**he is not here: behold the place where they laid him**), but this in itself was no evidence of the resurrection (cf. John xx. 2, 13).

7. Cf. xiv. 28. This Gospel evidently does not contemplate any appearances of the risen Christ to the disciples in Jerusalem: otherwise in Luke and John. John omits the reference to Galilee. Luke gives quite another turn to it (Luke xxiv. 6). Perhaps **Peter** is rather named as the leader of the Apostles than to show that his denial was forgiven: the desertion of the other disciples was even more complete (see n. on xiv. 66).

8. **they trembled and were amazed.** R.V., "trembling and astonishment had come upon them." The shock of what they had seen and heard was too great for them to fulfil the angel's commision: they fled in terror and did not deliver their message, **for they were afraid.** *And with these words Mark's Gospel,* as we have it, *ends.* (See Introduction.) In Matthew they "ran to bring his disciples word," Jesus Himself appearing to them in the way. Luke says, "they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest." The Evangelists were absolutely certain of the *fact* which they record, but the real evidence

for the resurrection is to be sought elsewhere than in a reconciliation of their conflicting accounts.

[Mark xvi. 9–20.]

THE APPENDIX.

[9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week,
he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had
10 cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had
11 been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they,
when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen
12 of her, believed not. After that he appeared in another
form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the
13 country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither
14 believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the
eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their
unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not
15 them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said
unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel
16 to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall
17 be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And
these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall
they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
18 they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly
thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the
19 sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had
spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat
20 on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and
preached every where, the Lord working with them, and
confirming the word with signs following. Amen.]

These twelve verses certainly form *no part of Mark's Gospel.* Some points of the internal evidence against them will be remarked on in the following brief notes: for the external evidence

and a brief discussion of the questions to which their rejection gives rise, see Introduction.

9–11. The last verse left us following the fortunes of the women who had fled in terror from the empty tomb, among whom was Mary Magdalene. But instead of continuing, the story takes a fresh start, returning on ver. 1, and introducing Mary as if she had not been named before. Moreover, the appearance of Jesus to her is not *related* with the wonder and joy that belong to such an experience, but merely *noted* in cold, matter-of-fact manner. This character of formal notes appears in the sections which follow; a poor exchange for the warmth and life of Mark's story hitherto. The vocabulary and style show marked difference from the rest of the book. This "ending" is in fact *a bald summary of Christophanies* gathered from the other Gospels, and betraying at its close distinct *ecclesiastical* and even *legendary influence.*

This section combines John xx. 16–18 (cf. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10) with the disciples' disbelief of the women who reported the empty tomb (Luke xxiv. 11).

12, 13. The appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13–35). The detail **in another form** represents Luke's "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." The assertion that the rest did not believe them is in flat contradiction of Luke's narrative (vers. 33–35).

14. A summary of Luke xxiv. 36–43; John xx. 19–25. The reason given for the **upbraiding** of the disciples is due to the summarist.

15–18. These instructions appear to belong to the scene of ver. 14, and so to represent Luke xxiv.

44–49: a closer parallel to vers. 15, 16 is found in Matthew's account of words spoken on the mountain in Galilee (xxviii. 16–20).

16. The reference to the baptism of converts is from the practice of the early Church. It is needless to say that Jesus never made baptism a condition of salvation.

damned. R.V., "condemned."

17, 18. Casting out demons and healing the sick are part of our Lord's commission to the Twelve, confirmed in the experience of the early Church. For "speaking with tongues" (R.V. marg. omits "new") cf. 1 Cor. xiv.; Acts ii. 1–13, x. 46, xix. 6. The immunity from serpents and poison is a legendary accretion, possibly by distortion of words spoken metaphorically.

19, 20. Later theological influence is evident in **sat on the right hand of God** and in **working with them and confirming the word.**

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